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THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT, LIFESTYLE, AND MENTAL WELL-BEING IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

HUBUNGAN ANTARA ALAM SEKITAR, GAYA HIDUP DAN KESEJAHTERAAN MENTAL DI BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the intricate interplay between the environment, mental well-being, and lifestyle, aiming to understand how these three elements collectively shape an individual's overall health and quality of life. Using a quantitative research approach, the study examines the connections between environmental factors, personal habits, and mental health outcomes in Brunei Darussalam. Findings emphasize the crucial role of environmental elements, particularly green spaces, air quality, and social settings, in influencing mental well-being. Additionally, lifestyle choices such as physical activity, daily routines, and work-life balance emerge as significant contributors to mental health. Understanding these relationships paves the way for fostering a healthier environment and enhancing both individual and community well-being. Moreover, this study highlights the importance of aligning daily life with Islamic teachings, promoting responsible environmental stewardship and mental self-care. The findings offer valuable insights for shaping public health initiatives and policies aimed at improving mental well-being. This highlights the need for initiatives that encourage healthier behaviors and cultivate environments that support mental health and overall quality of life.

Keywords: Environmental factors, Lifestyle, Mental well-being, Quality of life, Islamic teachings

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneroka interaksi antara persekitaran, kesejahteraan mental dan gaya hidup, bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana ketiga-tiga elemen ini secara kolektif membentuk keseluruhan kesihatan dan kualiti hidup individu. Menggunakan pendekatan penyelidikan kuantitatif, kajian ini mengkaji hubungan antara faktor persekitaran, tabiat peribadi, dan hasil kesihatan mental di Negara Brunei Darussalam. Penemuan menekankan peranan penting elemen alam sekitar, terutamanya ruang hijau, kualiti udara, dan tetapan sosial, dalam mempengaruhi kesejahteraan mental. Selain itu, pilihan gaya hidup seperti aktiviti fizikal, rutin harian dan keseimbangan kerja-kehidupan muncul sebagai penyumbang penting kepada kesihatan mental. Memahami hubungan ini membuka jalan untuk memupuk persekitaran yang lebih sihat dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan individu dan komuniti. Selain itu, kajian ini menekankan kepentingan menyelaraskan kehidupan seharian dengan ajaran Islam, menggalakkan penjagaan alam sekitar yang bertanggungjawab dan penjagaan diri mental. Penemuan ini menawarkan pandangan berharga untuk membentuk inisiatif dan dasar kesihatan awam yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan mental. Ini menyerlahkan keperluan untuk inisiatif yang menggalakkan tingkah laku yang lebih sihat dan memupuk persekitaran yang menyokong kesihatan mental dan kualiti hidup keseluruhan.

Kata Kunci: Faktor persekitaran, Gaya hidup, Kesejahteraan mental, Kualiti hidup, Ajaran Islam

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the interplay between intellect, society, and the environment is crucial, as awareness of their interconnectedness continues to grow in modern times. The intellect is a divine gift that distinguishes humans from other creations, enabling discernment between right and wrong. As Auda (2008) highlights, one of the highest objectives of Shariah is the preservation of intellect, which is essential for human development and the pursuit of knowledge. Traditionally, this principle has encouraged learning and the avoidance of harmful influences, yet the digital era has reshaped long-held theological concepts, challenging notions of free will, human nature, and truth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further disrupted societal well-being, impacting both mental health and environmental hygiene. This underscores the need for resilience and an integrated approach to addressing these crises. Islam teaches that our perception of the world, attitudes, and actions shape both society and the environment (Fathil et al., 2015). Thus, safeguarding Maqasid Shariah, particularly the preservation of intellect, is vital for attaining a

balanced and ethical society. Additionally, a healthy mind guided by Islamic principles is integral to both societal and environmental well-being.

Mental well-being is influenced by various factors, including stigma (Better Health, 2015), which arises when individuals are perceived negatively due to unique traits or mental health conditions (Mayo Clinic, 2017). Stigma can lead to discrimination, affecting self-perception, social interactions, and overall quality of life. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated mental health challenges, with studies highlighting rising anxiety, depression, and burnout in Brunei (Maideen et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2023; Idris et al., 2021). Understanding how mental well-being impacts daily life, work-life balance, and environmental surroundings is crucial in addressing these challenges and fostering awareness for a healthier society.

This research aimed to examine how mental well-being affects an individual's quality of life and surrounding environment. The objectives are: (1) to assess the relationship between mental well-being and various aspects of life, including personal time, physical activities, and sustainability practices, and (2) to examine how environmental conditions influence mental well-being and quality of life. This study explores the interplay between mental well-being, environmental factors, and quality of life, focusing on individuals aged 18–30 years, particularly students and working professionals. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected through surveys. Three hypotheses were postulated:

H_1: Greater exposure to the negative impacts of the environment has a negative relationship with mental well-being, leading to lower levels of overall quality of life.

H_2: Effective management of one's lifestyle contributes to a higher overall quality of life.

H_3: One's mental well-being has a significant impact on overall quality of life.

Findings will inform public health policies, urban planning, and mental health interventions, particularly in designing sustainable, resilient environments that prioritize well-being, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration to create healthier communities.

1. Literature Review

Mental well-being is a fundamental aspect of human health, shaping an individual's ability to cope with life's challenges and contribute to society. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to contribute to his or her community. It is a crucial element of health and well-being that supports both our individual and group capacity to decide, form connections, and influence the world we live in." (WHO, 2022). Once considered a taboo topic, mental health is now widely recognized as a crucial factor in overall quality of life.

Environmental factors significantly influence mental well-being, with elements such as pollution, climate change, and urban living conditions shaping cognitive and emotional health. Conversely, an individual's mental state can affect environmental perceptions, behaviors, and sustainability practices. The WHO highlights that access to clean air, safe water, and well-planned urban spaces is essential for both physical and psychological well-being (World Health Organization, 2022).

Quality of life is a multidimensional concept encompassing physical and mental health, social relationships, economic stability, and environmental conditions (Harper, 2014). A positive mental state can enhance environmental consciousness and sustainable behaviors, contributing to a healthier and more fulfilling life. Understanding these interconnected factors is essential for fostering resilient individuals and communities.

a. Environmental Impact

The world faces urgent environmental challenges due to a complex interplay of factors, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and resource depletion. Rising global temperatures, extreme weather events, and habitat destruction threaten ecosystems and human well-being (Shivanna, 2022). Pollution, particularly air and water contamination, further exacerbates these issues, impacting both environmental and human health. In Brunei, a nation rich in biodiversity, sustainable conservation efforts are essential for balancing economic growth with environmental preservation (Hj Ibrahim, 2014).

Brunei's environmental management, overseen by the Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation (JASTRe), addresses growing concerns such as air pollution, haze

episodes, and industrial emissions. Although Brunei's air quality remains relatively good, localized pollution from vehicles, industries, and open burning continues to contribute to environmental degradation. Haze outbreaks, particularly between May and October, have been severe, with major episodes recorded over the years (Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation, 2019). However, no comprehensive study has assessed the contribution of various sources to these haze events.

Brunei has one of the highest per capita carbon footprints, emitting 18.28 tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) per person (Nur Qayyimah Julkipli et al., 2023). Climate change, driven by fossil fuel combustion, leads to extreme weather, rising sea levels, and environmental disruptions. The WHO warns that climate change threatens essential resources such as clean air, water, and food security, potentially causing 250,000 additional deaths annually between 2030 and 2050 (World Health Organization, 2023). Reducing emissions through sustainable energy use, transportation policies, and waste management can mitigate these impacts and improve public health.

Deforestation in Brunei, primarily driven by infrastructure expansion and agriculture, particularly oil palm plantations, results in habitat loss, biodiversity decline, and increased carbon emissions. Between 2010 and 2022, Brunei lost 920 hectares of tree cover, releasing 611,000 tons of CO_2 into the atmosphere (Hj Ibrahim, 2014; Vizzuality, n.d.). Conservation efforts are crucial to protecting its forests and wildlife.

Brunei has taken measures to mitigate pollution, including the introduction of low-sulfur fuels and unleaded gasoline. However, urban vehicle emissions remain a significant concern (Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation, 2019). Industrial activities, particularly emissions from asphalt plants and brick kilns, further contribute to localized air pollution. Additionally, the open burning of waste and agricultural residue significantly impacts air quality, increases greenhouse gas emissions, and threatens biodiversity (Andini et al., 2018). Despite the absence of specific legislation on industrial emissions, Brunei Shell has implemented an Environmental Management Plan to regulate air quality (Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation, 2019).

The oil and gas sector, which contributed 49.6% to Brunei's GDP in 2021, plays a key role in economic development but also poses environmental risks (Petroleum Authority of Brunei Darussalam, n.d.). Oil extraction and refining contribute to air and water pollution,

habitat disturbances, and greenhouse gas emissions. Although environmental regulations exist, continued efforts are needed to adopt sustainable practices such as green technologies and responsible waste management to minimize the sector's environmental impact. Brunei's commitment to environmental sustainability is essential for its future. Strengthening policies, increasing research, and fostering international collaboration will be crucial in addressing these challenges while ensuring economic growth and ecological preservation.

b. **Mental Well-Being and Environmental Influences**

Mental well-being is a holistic state of emotional, psychological, and social health, characterized by resilience, emotional stability, and a sense of purpose (WHO, 2022). It extends beyond the absence of mental illness to include self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and effective coping strategies, all of which contribute to overall life satisfaction (Cianconi et al., 2022). Enhancing mental well-being involves self-awareness, emotional regulation, and effective coping mechanisms. Practicing self-compassion fosters inner support, shielding the mind from irrational and negative thoughts. This mental resilience, akin to meta-awareness, enables individuals to consciously evaluate their thoughts and experiences (Banks, 2009). Meta-awareness is applicable in various contexts, including mindfulness, situational awareness, and self-reflection (Banks, 2009).

The physical environment significantly impacts mental health. Factors such as pollution, extreme temperatures, noise, and poor living conditions contribute to stress, sleep disturbances, and increased risks of anxiety and depression (Society, 2018). Exposure to neurotoxicants like solvents, pesticides, and air pollutants has been linked to mood disorders, impulsivity, and cognitive impairments (Reuben et al., 2022). Particulate matter and nitrogen oxides, for instance, are associated with an elevated risk of mental illnesses, including ADHD, autism, depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia (Reuben et al., 2022).

c. **Way of Life**

A Muslim's way of life is deeply rooted in Islam, which serves as a comprehensive guide for daily living. Central to this is the belief in the oneness of Allah and adherence to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, as outlined in the Quran and Hadith. Muslims practice acts of worship such as the five daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, giving charity (Zakat), and performing Hajj if able. Principles including honesty, compassion, and justice

govern personal conduct and social interactions. Strong familial and community bonds, modesty in dress and behavior, and adherence to halal dietary laws further define a Muslim's lifestyle, emphasizing faith, morality, and commitment to Islamic principles.

The Maqasid Shariah reinforce a Muslim's way of life by promoting well-being, justice, and ethical conduct. Scholars identify five core objectives: (1) Preservation of religion, whereby safeguarding faith through worship, knowledge-seeking, and devotion is a priority for all Muslims; (2) Preservation of life, whereby Islam values human life, encouraging self-care, medical treatment, and a healthy lifestyle; (3) Preservation of intellect, whereby Islam promotes learning, critical thinking, and avoidance of harmful substances such as alcohol and drugs; (4) Preservation of lineage, whereby maintaining strong family ties and fulfilling marital and parental duties ensure continuity and stability; and (5) Preservation of property, whereby ethical earning, avoiding fraud, and practicing charity help maintain financial integrity and societal fairness (Baharuddin et al., 2019). Overall, the *Maqasid Shariah* guide personal behavior, legal rulings, and social norms, emphasizing well-being, justice, and ethics, allowing Muslims to seek spiritual fulfillment and contribute to a just society (Muhammad et al., 2017).

d. **Interplay Between Environment, Mental Well-Being, and Way of Life**

Understanding the synergy between environment, lifestyle, and mental well-being offers insights into enhancing overall quality of life. A supportive environment positively influences mental health, while responsible lifestyle choices contribute to environmental sustainability. Encouraging eco-friendly behaviors helps preserve natural resources for future generations. Access to green spaces, fresh air, and natural landscapes is linked to reduced stress and improved mood. Time spent in nature enhances cognitive function and relaxation, mitigating mental fatigue and enhancing focus (Jimenez, 2021). Additionally, a supportive community fosters mental well-being by providing social connections and a sense of belonging. In contrast, prolonged isolation can contribute to anxiety and depression, though some individuals find solitude restorative (Brandt et al., 2022).

Physical surroundings also impact mental health. A well-designed, functional, and aesthetically pleasing living space promotes well-being, while cluttered or poorly lit environments can increase stress and reduce productivity (Evans, 2003). These environmental factors, in turn, influence lifestyle and mental health. A disrupted environment can negatively

affect an individual's way of life, leading to emotional distress (Evans, 2003). Thus, maintaining a balanced environment and mental well-being is essential for a fulfilling Islamic way of life.

According to Bratman et al. (2015), studies show that walking in natural settings for 50 minutes enhances mood and reduces stress. Proximity to green spaces has been associated with lower levels of mental distress, even when controlling for demographic and socioeconomic variables. While nature exposure appears beneficial for mental health, further research is needed to fully understand its mechanisms and broader implications for psychological well-being.

Despite evidence linking environment, lifestyle, and mental health, research gaps remain on the precise mechanisms at play. Factors such as green space accessibility, air quality, and community characteristics could influence mental well-being; however, the interactions between these elements and personal attributes such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, and individual preferences require further exploration. Future research focusing on these complexities could help to develop holistic strategies for improving mental well-being within Islamic frameworks.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

This research aimed to examine how mental well-being affects an individual's quality of life and surrounding environment. To achieve the study's objectives, a survey was used to collect data exploring the interplay between mental well-being, environmental factors, and quality of life.

1. Research Sample Population

The research sample population included Bruneian university students and working individuals aged 18 to 30 years. This group was selected as the main research sample population because they are at a critical life stage where environmental influences, lifestyle choices, and mental well-being are closely intertwined. This demographic is particularly susceptible to stressors related to academic pressures, career development, and societal expectations, making them an ideal group for examining the interplay between these factors. Furthermore, their high digital engagement facilitated efficient data collection through online

surveys, ensuring accessibility and comprehensive participation. A minimum sample size of 85 respondents was determined using the sample-to-item ratio method (Memon et al., 2020).

2. Research Instrument Development

A survey questionnaire was the primary research instrument, designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data through open- and closed-ended questions. The survey comprised four (4) sections. The first section collected data on the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. The second section measured the respondents' environmental awareness, concern, and behavior in relation to their overall well-being. The third section measured the respondents' lifestyle, self-efficacy, and sense of control. The fourth section measured the respondents' mental well-being, stress management, coping strategies, and overall life satisfaction. The respondents' mental well-being was measured using the adapted World Health Organization-Five-Well-Being-Index (WHO-5), which is a self-reported instrument (Mental Health, Brain Health and Substance Use (MSD), 2024). Prior to conducting the main survey, the questionnaire was piloted with fifteen respondents, with comments used to revise and categorize some questions. Responses received in the pilot study were not included in the final statistical analyses. The questionnaire was prepared in two languages, English and Malay, to ease public understanding.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected via an online survey distributed through social media platforms over four months (October 2023–January 2024), with anonymity and confidentiality emphasized in the introduction. Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' sociodemographic details and percentage responses, and/or mean scores for the remaining sections. For the Likert scale items included in the survey, measures of central tendencies such as the mean scores were calculated. The calculated mean scores from the 4-point Likert scale measuring level of agreement and the 4-point Likert scale measuring level of effectiveness were interpreted based on interval calculation criteria in **Table 1**.

Likert	Interval	Difference	Description
1	1.00 – 1.79	0.79	Very Low
2	1.80 – 2.59	0.79	Low
3	2.60 – 3.39	0.79	Neutral
4	3.40 – 4.19	0.79	High
5	4.20 – 5.00	0.79	Very High

Table 1: Interpretation Criteria for Mean Scores (5-point Likert Scale)
Note. Adapted from Ocampo and Usita (2015).

As for the WHO-5, it was interpreted based on the level of reasoning from 0 - 100 as indicated in **Table 2**.

Score Range (%)	Level of Reasoning
0–49	Low level of mental well-being
50–70	Average level of mental well-being
71–100	High level of mental well-being

Table 2: *Score Range of WHO-5 and Level of Reasoning*
Note. Adapted from Topp et al. (2015).

Correlation analysis was used to examine relationships between the WHO-5 classification of mental well-being (score) and perceptions of environmental impact on well-being, perceived control and self-efficacy, and perception of respondents' quality of life. A *p*-value <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

1. Socio-Demographic Profiles

In total, 92 respondents were recruited for this study, with the majority aged between 18 and 22 years (64.1%, *n*=59), and the remaining aged between 23 and 30 years (35.9%, *n*=33). A total of 80.4% of the respondents were female, and 93.5% were students **(Table 3)**.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (in years)		
18–22	59	64.1
23–30	33	35.9
Gender		
Female	74	80.4
Male	18	19.6
Employment Status		
Student	86	93.5

Part-time employed	4	4.3
Full-time employed	1	1.1
Others	1	1.1

Table 3: Respondents' Socio-Demographic Profiles (n=92)

2. **Environmental Awareness, Concern, and Behavior in Relation to Well-Being**

In examining respondents' environmental attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of how the environment influences their well-being, this study first assessed the level of environmental awareness and concern among respondents **(Table 4)**.

Questions	Answer Options	Frequency (%)
How concerned are you about environmental issues such as global warming, pollution, and the exhaustion of natural resources?	Very concerned Neutral Not concerned	42 (45.7) 49 (53.3) 1 (1.1)
Have you made any lifestyle changes to reduce your environmental footprint (e.g., recycling, using public transportation, reducing energy consumption)?	Yes No	66 (71.7) 26 (28.3)
How often do you spend time in natural settings (e.g., watching sunsets, going to the beach, parks, etc.)?	Weekly Sometimes Rarely Never	54 (58.7) 30 (32.6) 8 (8.7) 0 (0.0)

Table 4: Respondents' Environmental Awareness and Concern (n=92)

When asked about their level of awareness and apprehension regarding issues such as global warming, pollution, and resource depletion, the results indicate that 53.3% of respondents remained neutral, neither strongly advocating for nor opposing the urgency of addressing global environmental challenges. Conversely, 45.7% expressed significant concern, highlighting a strong awareness of environmental issues. A minimal 1.1% of respondents demonstrated indifference toward global environmental concerns. These findings suggest a spectrum of attitudes, with a substantial proportion recognizing the importance of environmental issues, while a majority remain ambivalent.

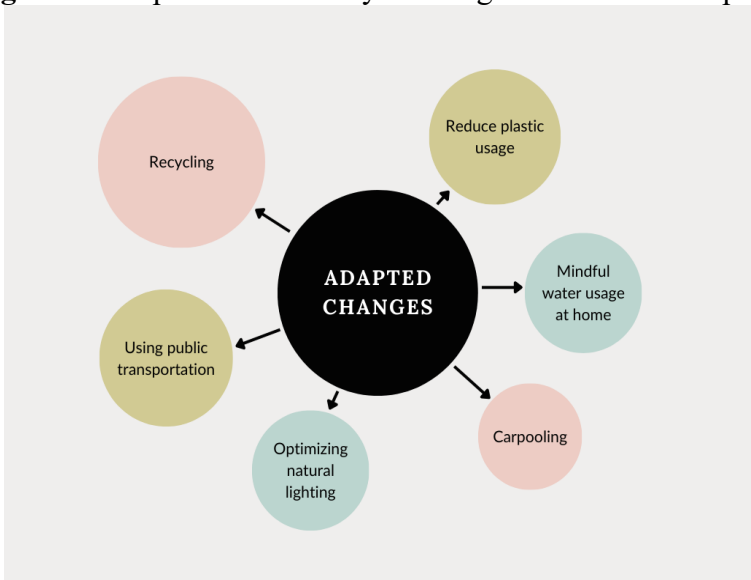
In evaluating respondents' environmental behavior, particularly their adoption of sustainable practices such as recycling, reducing plastic use, or using public transportation, the findings reveal that 71.7% of respondents have actively modified their lifestyles to mitigate their environmental impact. However, 28.3% reported making no such changes. This

highlights both a considerable commitment to sustainability among the majority and the presence of a notable segment not yet engaged in environmentally friendly practices.

Focusing on the extent of respondents' engagement with natural environments, which could have implications for well-being, the data indicate that 58.7% of respondents spend time in natural settings at least once per week, while 32.6% reported engaging with nature occasionally. A smaller proportion (8.7%) rarely spends time in natural environments, and notably, no respondent reported never engaging with nature. These results suggest a general inclination toward nature interaction among the majority, which may contribute positively to overall well-being.

Delving into specific behavioral adaptations, respondents frequently cited recycling, minimizing plastic use, and utilizing public transportation as key measures undertaken to promote sustainability. Additionally, efforts toward resource conservation, such as optimizing natural lighting and mindful water consumption indicate an increased awareness of sustainable living practices. The prevalence of cooperative community actions, such as carpooling and shared transport use, further demonstrates a collective commitment to environmental responsibility. **Figure 1** illustrates the lifestyle changes adopted by respondents to reduce their environmental footprint. Although respondents acknowledged existing challenges, their proactive approach suggests an evolving societal shift toward more sustainable lifestyles characterized by heightened environmental awareness and active resource conservation.

Figure 1: Respondents' Lifestyle Changes to Reduce Footprint



Note. The size of the circle denotes the frequency of the answers given in the survey.

The study assesses the respondents' perceptions of environmental impact on well-being, asking how different aspects of the environment (clean, healthy, beautiful, or natural) affect their mental, emotional, or physical state **(Table 5)**.

Statement	*n* (%)					Mean (SD)
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
A clean environment positively affects my overall well-being.	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	4 (4.3)	20 (21.7)	66 (71.7)	4.61 (0.770)
A healthy environment positively affects my overall well-being.	2 (2.2)	1 (1.1)	3 (3.3)	19 (20.7)	67 (72.8)	4.61 (0.798)
A beautiful environment positively affects my overall well-being.	2 (2.2)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	29 (31.5)	59 (64.1)	4.54 (0.776)
A natural setting environment (e.g., sunset, beach, and park) positively affects my overall well-being.	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	7 (7.6)	23 (25.0)	60 (65.2)	4.51 (0.819)

Table 5: Respondents' Perceptions of Environmental Impact on Well-Being (n=92)
Note. n, frequency; %, percentage; SD, Strongly Disagree; D, Disagree; N, Neutral; A, Agree; SA, Strongly Agree

Generally, respondents indicated strong agreement that a clean environment positively influences well-being, with 71.7% strongly agreeing and 21.7% agreeing. Similarly, 72.8% strongly agreed that a healthy environment enhances well-being, with 20.7% agreeing. 64.1% strongly agreed that a beautiful environment positively affects well-being. Lastly, 65.2% strongly agreed that natural settings positively impact well-being.

3. **Lifestyle, Self-Efficacy, and Sense of Control**

Respondents' lifestyle, self-efficacy, and sense of control were assessed using several questions **(Table 6)**.

Questions	Answer Options	Frequency (%)
How would you describe your daily physical activity level?	Very active	4 (4.4)
	Active	14 (15.2)
	Moderately	50 (54.3)
	Not active	24 (26.1)
What is your typical daily screen time (e.g., TV, computer, smartphone)?	Less than 2 hours	3 (3.3)
	2-5 hours	39 (42.4)
	More than 5 hours	50 (54.3)
How satisfied are you with your work-life	Very satisfied	6 (6.5)

balance?	Satisfied	21 (22.8)
	Neutral	49 (53.3)
	Less satisfied	14 (15.2)
	Not satisfied	2 (2.2)
Do you feel that your lifestyle choices align with your personal values and goals?	Yes	26 (28.3)
	No	9 (9.8)
	I do not know	57 (62.0)

Table 6: Respondents' Lifestyle (n=92)

Among the 92 respondents, 54.3% described their daily physical activity level as "moderately active," while 15.2% considered themselves "active." Notably, none reported being "never," suggesting a general inclination toward at least some level of physical activity. However, 26.1% identified as "not active," highlighting a segment that may require intervention to encourage more active lifestyles. In terms of screen time, a significant 54.3% reported spending "5 hours and above" on screens daily, while 42.4% used screens for "2–5 hours." This indicates a prevalent digital engagement that may have implications for lifestyle habits and well-being.

Regarding work-life balance satisfaction, 53.3% of respondents selected "neutral," while only 6.5% reported being "very satisfied," and 2.2% were "not satisfied." The large neutral response suggests a level of uncertainty or mixed experiences regarding work-life balance, warranting further exploration into underlying factors. When asked about the alignment of their lifestyle choices with personal values and goals, 62% were uncertain, while 28.3% believed their lifestyle aligned with their values. A smaller proportion (9.8%) felt their lifestyle did not align, indicating a need for greater self-reflection or external support in adopting meaningful lifestyle choices.

The study assessed respondents' perceived control and self-efficacy **(Table 7)**. For the statement, *"Generally, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live"*, a mean Likert score of 3.95 (SD = 0.930) indicates an overall tendency toward agreement, suggesting that most respondents feel a moderate sense of control over their circumstances. For the statement, *"Generally, I am good at managing the responsibilities of my daily life"*, the mean Likert score of 3.48 (SD = 0.883) suggests moderate agreement, but with notable variability, indicating differing levels of confidence in daily task management. For the statement *"In many ways, I feel in charge of my achievements in life"*, a mean Likert score of 4.05 (SD =

0.882) indicates a stronger sense of control over personal achievements, suggesting that respondents generally perceive themselves as active agents in their success.

Statement	*n* (%)					Mean (SD)
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
Generally, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	0 (0.0)	7 (7.6)	21 (22.8)	34 (37.0)	30 (32.6)	3.95 (0.930)
Generally, I am good at managing the responsibilities of my daily life.	1 (1.1)	10 (10.9)	36 (39.1)	34 (37.0)	11 (12.0)	3.48 (0.883)
In many ways, I feel in charge of my achievements in life.	1 (1.1)	2 (2.2)	21 (22.8)	35 (38.0)	33 (35.9)	4.05 (0.882)

Table 7: Respondents' Perceived Control and Self-Efficacy (n=92)
Note. n, frequency; %, percentage; SD, Strongly Disagree; D, Disagree; N, Neutral; A, Agree; SA, Strongly Agree

4. **Mental Well-Being, Stress Management, Coping Strategies, and Overall Life Satisfaction**

Respondents' current mental well-being, focusing on their overall mental health and emotional state at the time of the survey, was measured utilizing the WHO-5. Seventeen (17) out of 92 respondents were classified as having a low level of mental well-being, while 43 individuals had an average level, and the remaining 32 reported good mental well-being **(Table 8)**.

Level of Mental Well-Being	Frequency (%)
Low level of mental well-being (0–49%)	17 (18.5)
Average level of mental well-being (50–70%)	43 (46.7)
High level of mental well-being (71–100%)	32 (34.8)

Table 8: Classification of Respondents According to WHO-5 Score Range

When examining whether respondents have sought professional help for mental health concerns, such as stress, anxiety, or depression, the results show that the majority, approximately 83.7%, had not sought professional help, while 16.3% reported having done so **(Table 9)**. The relatively low percentage of respondents seeking professional help may reflect either a lack of awareness of available mental health services or cultural reluctance to address

mental health concerns publicly. This highlights the need for increased awareness campaigns aimed at reducing stigma and promoting help-seeking behavior. Additionally, it suggests that mental health support systems may not be adequately utilized, possibly due to barriers such as accessibility, awareness, or perceived ineffectiveness.

Questions	Answer Options	Frequency (%)
Have you ever sought professional help or counselling for mental health concerns (e.g., stress, anxiety, depression)?	Yes	15 (16.3)
	No	77 (83.7)
If yes, do you think the counselling session you sought is effective?*	Yes	8 (51.4)
	No	7 (48.6)
How do you typically manage stress and maintain mental well-being in your daily life?	Exercise	11 (12.0)
	Spending time alone	45 (48.9)
	Eating healthy foods	4 (4.3)
	Socializing	19 (20.7)
	Others	13 (14.1)

Table 9: Respondents' Stress Management and Coping Strategies (n=92)
**Note.* The percentage is calculated out of 15 respondents only.

The survey delves further into the perceived effectiveness of professional help or counseling **(Table 9)**. Among the 15 respondents who sought help, 48.6% expressed dissatisfaction, choosing "no" in response to the question on effectiveness. In contrast, 51.4% believed professional support was effective. This split suggests a need for further investigation into the quality and accessibility of mental health services. The perceived ineffectiveness may be related to factors such as the adequacy of professionals, counselling approaches, or overall satisfaction with the services provided.

The study also investigates respondents' strategies for managing stress and maintaining mental well-being. The most common coping mechanisms were spending time alone (*n*= 45), followed by socializing with family and friends (*n*=19), exercising (*n*=11), and eating healthy food (*n*=4) **(Table 9)**. Additional responses (data not shown) highlighted diverse coping practices, such as unwinding by going to bed, praying, or reading religious texts. Some participants emphasized understanding the root causes of their stress or maintaining a positive outlook. Notably, while some respondents used constructive strategies, others mentioned less healthy habits, such as excessive junk food consumption. These findings highlight the need to promote healthy coping mechanisms to support both physical and mental well-being.

The emotional impact of external demands, including those from home, work/school, and community, on the respondents' mental state was also assessed **(Table 10)**. For the statement, *"Generally, the demands of life at home often get me down"*, 11.9% strongly agreed, 44.6% were neutral, and 8.7% strongly disagreed. The mean Likert scale value of 2.83 suggests a slight tendency toward agreement, with moderate variability (SD = 1.075). Regarding *"Generally, the demands of my work/school life often get me down"*, only 2.2% strongly agreed and 10.9% agreed. The mean value of 3.54 suggests a neutral tendency, with a standard deviation of 1.000. For *"Generally, the community I live in often gets me down"*, 6.5% strongly agreed and 27.2% agreed. The mean value of 2.91 indicates a general trend toward agreement with moderate variability. These results suggest that while external demands, particularly from home and community life, tend to have a greater emotional impact on respondents, work/school pressures have a more neutral effect. Further research could explore specific sources of stress within these domains and propose targeted interventions.

Statement	***n* (%)**					**Mean (SD)**
	SD	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	
Generally, the demands of life at home often get me down.	11 (12.0)	21 (22.8)	41 (44.6)	11 (12.0)	8 (8.7)	2.83 (1.075)
Generally, the demands of my work/school life often get me down.	2 (2.2)	10 (10.9)	34 (37.0)	28 (30.4)	18 (19.6)	3.54 (1.000)
Generally, the community I live in often gets me down.	6 (6.5)	25 (27.2)	38 (41.3)	17 (18.5)	6 (6.5)	2.91 (0.991)
When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far.	3 (3.3)	9 (9.8)	32 (34.8)	21 (22.8)	27 (29.3)	3.65 (1.104)

Table 10: Respondents' Perceptions of their Quality of Life (n=92)
Note. n, frequency; %, percentage; SD, Strongly Disagree; D, Disagree; N, Neutral; A, Agree; SA, Strongly Agree

The final question evaluates respondents' overall life satisfaction **(Table 10)**. For the statement *"When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far,"* 3.3% strongly agreed, 9.8% agreed, 34.8% were neutral, 22.8% disagreed, and 29.3% strongly disagreed. The mean value of 3.65 suggests a neutral leaning, with a standard deviation of 1.104. The relatively high dissatisfaction rate may reflect unmet personal expectations, negative life events, or broader socio-economic factors. Addressing life

satisfaction may require a holistic approach that incorporates emotional support, career guidance, and opportunities for personal growth.

5. Correlation Analysis of WHO-5 Mental Well-Being with Environmental, Control, Self-Efficacy, and Quality of Life Perceptions

Correlation analysis revealed six (6) significant findings between various life factors and WHO-5 mental well-being scores **(Table 11)**. A moderate positive correlation was found between the perception of managing daily life responsibilities and mental well-being (r=0.298, p=0.004). This suggests that individuals who feel more capable of managing their daily responsibilities tend to report better mental well-being. Additionally, a strong positive correlation exists between feeling in charge of one's achievements and mental well-being (r=0.380, p<0.001). This indicates that those who perceive greater control over their achievements in life generally have higher mental well-being.

Variables tested		WHO-5 Mental Well-Being Score
A clean environment positively affects my overall well-being.	*r*	0.014
	p	0.893
	n	92
A healthy environment positively affects my overall well-being.	*r*	0.055
	p	0.599
	n	92
A beautiful environment positively affects my overall well-being.	*r*	0.040
	p	0.705
	n	92
A natural setting environment (e.g., sunset, beach, and park) positively affects my overall well-being.	*r*	-0.021
	p	0.842
	n	92
Generally, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	*r*	-0.015
	p	0.888
	n	92
Generally, I am good at managing the responsibilities of my daily life.	*r*	0.298
	p	**0.004***
	n	92
In many ways, I feel in charge of my achievements in life.	*r*	0.380
	p	**<0.001***
	n	92
Generally, the demands of life at home often get me down.	*r*	-0.248
	p	**0.017***
	n	92

Generally, the demands of my work/school life often get me down.	*r*	-0.278
	p	**0.007***
	n	92
Generally, the community I live in often gets me down.	*r*	-0.233
	p	**0.025***
	n	92
When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far.	*r*	0.437
	p	**<0.001***
	n	92

Table 11: Correlation Analysis
Note. r, Pearson correlation coefficient; *p, p*-value; *n,* number; *, statistically significant.

In contrast, a moderate negative correlation was found between the demands of life at home and mental well-being (r=-0.248, p=0.017). This suggests that greater home-related stress is associated with lower mental well-being. Similarly, a moderate negative correlation was also observed between the demands of work/school life and mental well-being (r=-0.278, p=0.007), indicating that higher stress from work or school leads to poorer mental well-being. The analysis also revealed a weak negative correlation found between community life demands and mental well-being (r=-0.233, p=0.025), showing that increased stress from the community may slightly lower mental well-being. Lastly, a strong positive correlation was found between life satisfaction and mental well-being (r=0.437, p<0.001), highlighting that individuals who are more pleased with how their life has unfolded tend to report better mental well-being.

In summary, the results suggest that a sense of control over life, managing responsibilities, and life satisfaction are positively associated with better mental well-being, while stress from home, work, or community demands negatively impacts mental well-being. Based on the correlation results, the findings generally support the proposed study's hypotheses as follows.

H_1: Greater exposure to the negative impacts of the environment has a negative relationship with mental well-being, leading to lower levels of overall quality of life.
The results for home life demands (r=-0.248, p=0.017), work/school life demands (r=-0.278, p=0.007), and community life demands (r=-0.233, p=0.025) support this hypothesis. These negative correlations suggest that increased exposure to negative environmental factors, for

example, stress from home, work, or community life is associated with lower mental well-being, which could translate into a lower quality of life.

H_2: Effective management of one's lifestyle contributes to a higher overall quality of life.

The positive correlations with managing daily life responsibilities (r=0.298, p=0.004) and feeling in charge of achievements (r=0.380, p<0.001) support this hypothesis. Individuals who report better management of daily life and greater control over their achievements tend to have higher mental well-being, which likely contributes to a better quality of life.

H_3: One's mental well-being has a significant impact on overall quality of life.

The significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and mental well-being (r=0.437, p<0.001) supports this hypothesis. The relationship suggests that individuals with better mental well-being tend to be more satisfied with their lives, which is an indicator of a higher overall quality of life.

DISCUSSION

The study aims to assess the relationship between mental well-being and various aspects of life, including personal time, physical activities, and sustainability practices. The findings underscore a growing environmental consciousness among respondents, with many demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainability. Despite a significant proportion having adopted lifestyle changes to reduce environmental impact, a segment remains indifferent or inactive in this regard. This disparity highlights the varying levels of engagement, with some actively fostering environmental behavior linked to well-being. Notably, the data suggest that engagement with nature in respondents' lives could reinforce the connection between environmental behavior and personal well-being, contributing to a broader understanding of environmental awareness and its impact on both personal and community well-being. Research has consistently shown that natural environments positively influence mental health, with interactions with nature linked to reduced anxiety, negative thinking, stress hormone levels, and improved cognitive function, brain activity, physical health, and sleep quality (Bratman et al., 2012; Bratman et al., 2015; Capaldi et al., 2014; Hartig et al., 2014). Furthermore, exposure to diverse natural settings, such as parks or bodies of water, has been associated with improved mood, self-esteem, and overall well-being (Fuller et al., 2007).

The results further reveal that although most respondents feel somewhat active and in control of their achievements, there are areas of concern. High screen time suggests sedentary behavior, and uncertainty regarding work-life balance hints at potential stressors or a misalignment with personal goals. Although respondents generally report feeling in control of their lives, variability in responses indicates that self-efficacy is experienced differently among individuals. These insights underscore the need to foster awareness and develop interventions aimed at improving lifestyle alignment, self-efficacy, and overall well-being. Chronic stress can have profound effects on mental health, contributing to increased risks of anxiety and depression through neurobiological mechanisms (McEwen, 2007). Additionally, environmental factors such as pollution and urban living conditions have been identified as significant contributors to mental health disparities, further emphasizing the need for proactive mental health interventions (World Health Organization, 2022).

In terms of mental health, the study shows that a majority of respondents (83.7%) have not sought professional help, and of those who did, only 51.4% found it effective. Coping strategies for stress varied, with most respondents preferring alone time or socializing with family and friends. Interestingly, emotional strain was more pronounced from home and community demands than from work or school pressures. Additionally, many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their overall life satisfaction, indicating a need for better mental health support and healthier coping mechanisms. Poor urban planning, air pollution, and lack of green spaces have been linked to increased psychological distress and reduced life satisfaction, exacerbating existing mental health challenges (Evans, 2003).

In examining how environmental conditions influence mental well-being and quality of life, the correlation analysis supports all three hypotheses. There is a notable negative relationship between psychological well-being and life satisfaction concerning community, work, and home life stressors. Individuals who experience these stressors as burdens report lower levels of well-being and life satisfaction. This relationship emphasizes that overall well-being is substantially linked to how individuals perceive various aspects of their lives, including stress and personal satisfaction. The low *p*-values with the correlation coefficients further confirm the statistical significance of these relationships, suggesting that the observed correlations are unlikely to be due to chance. These findings align with a previous study by Kirkbride et al. (2024), which indicated that environmental factors affecting mental health often interact with other challenges, creating a vicious cycle. For example, depression,

substance abuse, or other mental health conditions can exacerbate environmental issues like unemployment and poor living conditions (World Health Organization, 2022). Additionally, research suggests that proximity to green urban spaces can positively affect cognition, mood, and reduce anxiety and depression (Bratman et al., 2012; Bratman et al., 2015). This connection is linked to both the visual impact of green environments and physical activity in accessible outdoor spaces. Studies on air pollution have also shown that prolonged exposure contributes to depression and psychosis, underscoring the significance of the environment in influencing mental health outcomes (Evans, 2003).

The current study highlights key trends in environmental engagement, mental well-being, and quality of life. It also underscores the need for holistic approaches in addressing these concerns. Mental health is shaped by a combination of lifestyle factors, social interactions, and environmental conditions, with nature playing a particularly important role in promoting overall well-being. Notably, this study's reliance on self-report measures presents a limitation, as data were collected through questionnaires completed by respondents. This method may be susceptible to social desirability bias or inaccurate self-assessment, potentially affecting the reliability of the findings. Furthermore, the study sample might not fully represent the broader population due to limitations in demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity, which could constrain the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the complexity of individuals' mental health and quality of life experiences is too intricate to be fully captured by quantitative metrics alone.

To enhance the validity and comprehensiveness of future research, it is recommended that researchers incorporate alternative data collection methods beyond self-reported measures, such as observational techniques or in-depth interviews. These approaches would provide richer insights into individuals' experiences and perspectives while reducing the biases associated with self-reporting. Moreover, efforts should be made to diversify the study sample to ensure that it accurately represents a wider range of demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds. This would help improve the generalizability of the findings and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of mental health and quality of life across diverse populations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant relationship between mental well-being and various aspects of an individual's life, including environmental factors, stressors, and coping strategies. The findings underscore the importance of raising awareness and implementing interventions aimed at improving lifestyle alignment, self-efficacy, and mental health, as these elements are intrinsically linked to overall quality of life. While the results show that environmental factors alone may not always be reliable indicators of well-being, the interconnection between personal satisfaction, stress management, and coping mechanisms is evident. Furthermore, engaging with natural environments has been shown to have beneficial effects on mental health, reinforcing the potential of nature-based interventions in enhancing well-being. Ultimately, these insights contribute to a broader understanding of how mental well-being influences quality of life and underscore the need for comprehensive approaches to mental health support, environmental awareness, and healthy lifestyle practices. Moving forward, there is a clear opportunity to promote strategies that integrate both psychological and environmental well-being in order to improve the overall health of individuals and communities.

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