



LIFE SATISFACTION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

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Human being is an objective creature always evaluating his life situation. He feels no satisfaction until he gains his goals. Perhaps it can be said that the final aspiration of every human being is to attain his goals and desires and this attainment leads to life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is the central aspect of human welfare. It is the ultimate goal and every human being strives to achieve this goal throughout the life. Attaining life satisfaction is important for the youth, who are facing a tough competition in today's fiercely competitive environment and are expected to choose or to make progress toward choosing a course of study/occupation that will provide economic self-support in their future life. They have to take crucial decisions regarding their ensuing life (by choice or compulsion or default) that frequently have lasting consequences throughout rest of their lives. Any right decision made by them lead to satisfaction and wrong decision may lead to dissatisfaction. Among the different domains which influence life satisfaction of individuals, mental health is considered to be very important. A mentally healthy person develops attitudes in relation to himself and his environment which lifts him above childishness in thought and behavior. He accepts responsibility for his actions and doesn't work for excuses for his behavior and remains satisfied in his life.

Life satisfaction is dependent on a number of life domains as age, gender, socio-economic status, student status, job status, family etc. Each domain has a large effect on an individual's life satisfaction. Domains create roles that an individual participates in, and when one is participating in multiple roles, it is likely that a decrease in life satisfaction will occur.

Although much research has been done on the different variables affecting life satisfaction, there is need to conduct research on the variables affecting college students.

It has been found out that students who are satisfied with one domain of their college experiences are likely to be dissatisfied with other domains and vice-versa (Lounsbury, Saudargas, Gibson & Leong, 2005). Life satisfaction in college students has recently been examined as a precursor of withdrawal and dropout for students who are experiencing low life satisfaction. Those who are in college are usually at a higher level of maturity and growth than peers who are not in college. Moller (1996) stated that students attributed improvement of their sense of well-being mainly to personal growth, maturity as well as sense of achievement. Other positive factors that could influence their sense of satisfaction include progress with their studies, personal and intimate life, and also a change in their attitude toward life. In this competitive world many academic stressors that students encounter have a great influence on them. Studies done on college students across the globe show that college students are found predominantly satisfied with their lives themselves, and with the social domains of family and friends (Diener & Diener, 1995). Some studies show that college students are more satisfied with their lives because they experience an increase in roles and responsibilities (Bailey & Miller, 1998). Other studies show that college students have a high need for cognition and that they derive a sense of satisfaction from their need for cognition (Coutinho & Woolery, 2004). For college students, it has been observed that studying significantly promoted their life satisfaction perhaps because they gather a sense of achievement from it.

Preliminary evidence suggests that there are a number of negative and positive outcomes associated with life satisfaction of a child/adolescent. For example, dissatisfaction with life are linked with a variety of social-emotional difficulties including anxiety, depression (Huebner & Alderman, 1993), negative peer interactions (Valois, Zullig, Huebner, & Drane, 2001), and chemical abuse (Zullig, Huebner, Gilman, Patton, & Murray, 2005). On the other hand high life satisfaction are associated with a variety of positive outcomes including high self-esteem (Harter, 1999), self-concept (Gilman & Huebner, 1997; Terry & Huebner, 1995), and self-mastery (Rosenfield, 1992). Moreover, school-aged students who report higher overall life satisfaction generally report less dissatisfaction with their school experiences (Gilman, 2001), greater satisfaction with their family life (Dew & Huebner, 1994), and greater satisfaction with their friends (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 2001) than the adolescents who report lower level of overall satisfaction with their life.

Frisch (2000) reported that the low levels of life satisfaction are predictive of a variety of negative outcomes including mental and health problems like anxiety and depression.

Prenda and Lachman (2001) found a positive linear relationship between age and life satisfaction and found that life satisfaction increases with age.

Srivastava et al (2005) concluded that students of arts, commerce and science have significant difference in their life satisfaction and general well-being. There was positive correlation between life satisfaction and general well-being. There was no gender difference regarding both life satisfaction and general well-being.

Viren et al (2007) examined the association between life satisfaction, loneliness, general health and depression. Life satisfaction was negatively and significantly correlated with suicidal attitudes, loneliness and depression; and positively with health, which was negatively and significantly correlated with depression and loneliness. Self concept was negatively correlated with loneliness and depression was positively and significantly correlated with loneliness. Meditational analysis showed that the effects of loneliness and life dissatisfaction on depression were fully mediated by health.

Tamini and Far (2009) conducted a study on mental health and life satisfaction of Irani and Indian students and the results indicated that life satisfaction improves students' mental health. Considering the fact that the life dissatisfaction of students gives rise to emotional and psychological problems, life satisfaction improves level of mental health.

Fergusson, McLeod, Swain, Chapple and Poulton (2015) conducted a longitudinal study of a birth cohort on 1265 children of New Zealand. The findings revealed significant associations ($p < 0.01$) between repeated measures of life satisfaction and the psychiatric disorders, major depression, anxiety disorder, suicidality, alcohol dependence and substance dependence. After adjustment for non-observed sources of confounding by fixed effects, statistically significant associations ($p < 0.05$) remained between life satisfaction and major depression, anxiety disorder, suicidality and substance dependence. Overall, those reporting three or more mental health disorders had mean life satisfaction scores that were nearly 0.60 standard deviations below those without mental health problems. A structural equation model examined the direction of causation between life satisfaction and mental health problems. Statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) reciprocal associations were found between life satisfaction and mental health problems.

Statement of the Problem

Life Satisfaction of Undergraduate Students In Relation To Their Mental Health

Objectives

- 1.To investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of undergraduate students.
- 2.To investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of male students.
- 3.To investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of female students.
- 4.To investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of rural students.
- 5.To investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of urban students.

Hypotheses

The foretasted objectives were achieved by framing the following hypotheses:

- H₀1 There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of undergraduate students.
- H₀2 There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of male students.
- H₀3 There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of female students.
- H₀4 There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of rural students.
- H₀5 There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of urban students.

Method and Procedure

Design of the study

The present study comes under the domain of descriptive research completed with survey method.

Sample

It is generally not possible to test or observe each and every unit of population. In every research study therefore sampling design is planned. 500 undergraduate students were selected from colleges affiliated to G.N.D.U. Amritsar.

Tools

- 1.Life Satisfaction Scale by Alam and Srivastava (2011).
- 2.Mental Health Battery by Singh and Sen Gupta (2008).

Findings and Conclusion

On the basis of analysis and interpretation of data following conclusions were drawn:

H₀ 1: There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of undergraduate students.

In order to verify Hypothesis Ho1, Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was applied and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation between life satisfaction and mental health of undergraduate students

Variables	N	Value of 'r'
Life Satisfaction and Mental Health	500	0.535**

** *Significant at 0.01 level*

(Table Value of $r=0.089$ at 0.05 and 0.115 at 0.01 level of confidence, df 498)

A glance at Table 1 clearly reveals that the value of coefficient of correlation between life satisfaction and mental health is 0.535($df=498$), which in comparison to Table values was found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance. The magnitude of correlation indicates that life satisfaction and mental health of undergraduate students bear a positive and significant relationship with each other i.e. better the mental health, higher will be the satisfaction with life. Thus the null hypothesis H₀ 1: There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of undergraduate students is not accepted at 0.01 level of confidence.

The results of the present study are supported by the findings of Mohmoud (2007) who reported that undergraduate students with higher level of depression, anxiety and stress indicated greater dissatisfaction in all areas of life.

The findings of the present study are also in tune with the results reported by Swami, Premuzic, Sinnah, Kannan, Stanistreet & Furnham(2007) who concluded that life satisfaction of medical students was negatively and significantly correlated with their suicidal attitudes, loneliness and depression and positively with health, which was negatively and significantly correlated with depression and loneliness.

The results of the present study are also supported by Guney, Kalafat & Boysan(2010) who reported that life satisfaction was negatively and significantly correlated with the scores from depression, anxiety and hopelessness scales. The findings suggest that the relationship between developing psychological problems is highly associated with the perceived levels of

anxiety, depression and life satisfaction. In addition, life satisfaction can be taken into account as a moderator variable for mental health studies.

H₀ 2: There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of male students.

In order to verify Hypothesis Ho 2, Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was applied and results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation between life satisfaction and mental health of male students

Variables	N	Value of 'r'
Life Satisfaction and mental health	250	0.523**

** *Significant at 0.01 level*

(Critical Value $r=0.089$ at 0.05 and 0.115 at 0.01 level of confidence, df 248)

A close scrutiny of results entered in Table 2 reveals that mental health of male students shares an 'r' of the magnitude 0.523($df=248$) with life satisfaction, which in comparison to Table values was found to be significant at 0.01 level. The magnitude of correlation indicates that life satisfaction and mental health of male students bear a positive and significant relationship with each other i.e. better the mental health of male students, higher will be the satisfaction with the life. Thus, the null hypothesis H₀ 2: There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of male students is not accepted.

The results are supported by the earlier studies done by Rew&Wong (2006) who reported that the relationship between life satisfaction, religiosity/spirituality and mental health were generally stronger or more unique for males and older adolescents than for females and younger adolescents.

The results of this hypothesis were also found to corroborate with the findings of Gupta and Kumar (2010) ,who were of the opinion that male students were better than female students in terms of mental health, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.

H₀ 3: There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of female students.

In order to verify Hypothesis Ho 3, Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was applied and results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation between life satisfaction and mental health of female students

Variables	N	Value of 'r'
Life Satisfaction and mental health	250	0.549**

*** Significant at 0.01 level*

(Critical Value $r=0.089$ at 0.05 and 0.115 at 0.01 level of confidence, df 248)

A perusal of results entered in Table 3 reveals that mental health of female students shares an 'r' of the magnitude 0.549($df=248$) with life satisfaction, which in comparison to Table values was found to be significant at 0.01 level. The magnitude of correlation indicates that life satisfaction and mental health of female students bear a positive and significant relationship with each other i.e. better the mental health of female students, higher will be the satisfaction with the life. Thus, the null hypothesis H_0 3: There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of female students is not accepted.

The results of the present study are in tune with the findings of Mohmoud (2007) who reported that anxiety was associated with being female and being less involved with religious and spiritual activities. Students who lived alone were less depressed, anxious and stressed. Students with higher levels of depression, anxiety and stress indicated greater dissatisfaction with all areas of life.

H_0 4: There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of rural students.

In order to verify Hypothesis H_0 4, Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was applied and results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation between life satisfaction and mental health of rural students

Variables	N	Value of 'r'
Life Satisfaction and mental health	263	0.493**

*** Significant at 0.01 level*

(Critical Value $r=0.089$ at 0.05 and 0.115 at 0.01 level of confidence, df 261)

A close scrutiny of results entered in Table 4 reveals that mental health of rural students shares an 'r' of the magnitude 0.493($df=261$) with life satisfaction, which in comparison to Table values was found to be significant at 0.01 level. The magnitude of correlation indicates that life satisfaction and mental health of rural students bear a positive and significant

relationship with each other i.e. better the mental health of rural students, higher will be the satisfaction with the life. Thus, the null hypothesis H_0 4: There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of rural students is not accepted.

The results of this hypothesis fell in line with the findings of Kaur(2015) who found that significant relationship exists between life satisfaction and mental health of rural students. The study also concluded that no significant difference exists between mental health of adolescents belonging to urban and rural areas.

H_0 5: There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of urban students.

In order to verify Hypothesis H_0 5, Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was applied and results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation between life satisfaction and mental health of urban students

Variables	N	Value of 'r'
Life Satisfaction and mental health	237	0.585**

** *Significant at 0.01 level*

(Critical Value $r=0.089$ at 0.05 and 0.115 at 0.01 level of confidence, df 235)

A glance at Table 5 clearly reveals that the value of coefficient of correlation between life satisfaction and mental health of urban students is 0.585($df=235$), which in comparison to Table values was found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance. The magnitude of correlation indicates that life satisfaction and mental health of urban students bear a positive and significant relationship with each other i.e. better the mental health of rural students, higher will be the satisfaction with life.

Thus, the null hypothesis H_0 5: There will be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of urban students is not accepted. The results are in tune with the studies of Nanda(2001) and Jha (2005)who reported that rural children faced more mental health problems than urban children especially girls, thus, urban students had better mental health than rural students and were more satisfied with their life.

Educational Implications

- The findings of the present study may help the parents, counselors to guide the students in educational, social and vocational fields.
- In the curriculum for the degree courses, mental health should be given due place which may help the teachers to understand their students properly .

- Focus should be on improving college/university climate which may help the students to perform better in the learning process.
- Findings of the present study may help the educationists and teachers to organize various curricular and co-curricular activities for students.
- In the light of present study, effective steps may be taken by parents and teachers to develop good mental health among students.
- It may help the teachers to create harmonious environment for effective teaching learning process.
- It may help the teachers to develop qualities like concentration, focusing, positive attitude, reasoning power among students.

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