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Life Satisfaction and Mental Status of Research Scholars in Research Institute: A Comparative Study of TISS and IIPS

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted with the objective of examining the nature of the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health of research scholar in research institutes. The population for our study was institute research scholar, from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) & International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS). Out of total 144 participants, 94 respondents were taken from IIPS and 50 respondents from TISS. The scale for measuring Multidimensional Students' life satisfaction, developed by Huebner (2001) was used. Among the demographic variables, there were significant difference between the IIPS & TISS research scholar with regard to income and satisfaction with family. Psychological wellbeing of IIPS research scholar was significantly, positively correlated with age, research experience, family, friends, institute, living environment, self and psychological distress of TISS research scholar was significantly, positively correlated with income, friends, institute, and self. On the other hand psychological distress of IIPS research scholar was significantly, negatively correlated with family, friends, living environment, self, psychological wellbeing and psychological distress of TISS research scholar was significantly, negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: *Life Satisfaction, Psychological Wellbeing, Psychological Distress, Research Scholar*

Measures of satisfaction with life domains have been found to be important correlates of overall life satisfaction in multiple studies, together explaining about 50% of the variance in life satisfaction (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Campbell, Con- verse, & Rodgers, 1976; Near, Smith, Rice, & Hunt, 1983; Rice, Near, & Hunt, 1979). "Bottom-up" theories of life satisfaction (Brief, Butcher, George, & Link, 1993) have suggested that life satisfaction represents an overall attitude, composed of components of satisfaction in various domains of life, but that the importance of any one specific life domain to overall life satisfaction varies by population (Andrews & Withey, 1976).

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Research has examined a wide variety of domain satisfactions, but individual studies have focused on the domains most pertinent to their population of respondents. Valois, Zullig, Huebner, and Drane (2004a) examined life satisfaction and suicidal thoughts among high-school adolescents. A secondary data analysis of 4758 respondents to the 1997 South Carolina Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (SCYRBS) was conducted. A logistic regression revealed that poor mental health, poor mental/physical health, serious suicide consideration, planning for suicide, attempting suicide, and attempting suicide that requires medical care were significantly related to life satisfaction. Because many adolescents are not "life skilled" in communication, stress-management, decision-making, problem-solving, and goal setting, they might be more likely to engage in suicide ideation or suicide behaviour.

Murphy, McDevitt-Murphy, and Barnett (2005) examined alcohol use, alcohol related problems, and life satisfaction. Alcohol use was associated with lower satisfaction in women, and female abstainers reported higher life satisfaction than heavy drinking women. Men showed a positive, curvilinear relation to social satisfaction, with low and heavy drinkers having less social satisfaction than moderate drinkers. Murphy et al. (2005) concluded that alcohol use by young adults can be associated with both positive and negative outcomes that may be gender specific.

Doyle, Irons, Owens, and Nassar (2005) examined the relationship between stress and life satisfaction in a sample of 72 college students enrolled in a stress-management course. Doyle et al. (2005) found that frequent practice of stress-management behaviours' significantly predicted higher life satisfaction. Deniz (2006) also examined the relationship between stress and life satisfaction in university students. A sample of 492 students completed measures on life satisfaction, coping, self-esteem and decision making. Life satisfaction was significantly related to problem-focused coping, seeking social support, and all decision-making styles.

Rode, Arthaud-Day, Mooney, Near, Baldwin, Bommer, and Rubin (2005) examined the relationship between life satisfaction and student academic achievement. A sample of 673 college students completed five online questionnaires related to student academic performance along with measures of subjective wellbeing, personality, and demographic items. Previous research by Astin (1993) found that overall satisfaction with college experience was only weakly related to student performance. Rode et al. (2005) found that although cognitive ability was the strongest predictor of academic achievement, life satisfaction had both a statistical and practical significance in relation to student performance as measured by grade point average.

The world health organization (2001) defines the concept of 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 make a contribution to his or her community." So, mental health is the balance between all aspects of life-social, physical, spiritual and emotional. It impacts on how people manage surroundings and make

choices in their lives.   It's an integral part of overall health. Mental health is more than absence of mental illness and has to do with many aspects of our lives including how we feel about ourselves, how we feel about others, how we are able to meet the demands of life. The scientific foundation of mental health is not clear but it is an essential component of our health.

Well-being is difficult to define and therefore measure. Some argue that well-being is best understood in terms of overall happiness or satisfaction with life. However, other models (Marks, 2005) include two personal dimensions and a social context: Satisfaction: measured by an indicator called "life satisfaction" which captures satisfaction, pleasure and enjoyment; Personal development: includes being engaged in life, curiosity, autonomy, fulfilling potential and feeling that life has a meaning (Ryan, 2001); Social well-being: sense of belonging to communities, positive attitude to others, feeling of contributing to society. While life satisfaction is strongly (and inversely) related to mental health and depression, personal development seems to be more strongly linked to overall health, longevity, resilience and ability to cope with adverse circumstances and thrive. For example, older people who score highly on the personal development dimension are less likely to develop serious illness (Singer B, 2001). The personal development dimension is also about being actively engaged which has positive implications regarding social cohesion.

Many previous studies showed that mental health has effect on life satisfaction. Mental health was measured by 56 items in mental health inventory designed by Srivastava and Jagdish (1983). The result shows that independent t-test found significant difference at the mean scores of mental health among students (professional and non-professional) with consideration of course. The independent t-test found no significant difference at the mean scores of mental health among professional students with consideration of residence and gender whereas significant difference was found among non-professional students' mental health with consideration of residence but no significant difference in terms of gender.

A specified study showed that the persons who are educated, currently married belongs to upper category have a better quality of life based on sample of 166 old age respondents (Raj, D., Swain, P.K. & Pedgaonkar, S. P. 2014). Viren, Tomas, Dhachayani, Thambu, Kumaraswami, Debi and Adrian (2007) examined the associations 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, depression was positively and significantly correlated with loneliness. Mediational analyses showed that the effects of loneliness and life dissatisfaction on depression were fully mediated by health. Researches done across the world on mental health revealed that it has various psychological effects on life satisfaction. Considering the fact, the impacts of mental health and life satisfaction are different. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to explore how research scholar

mental health in terms of psychological wellbeing and psychological distress related to life satisfaction by examining survey responses to questions related to satisfaction with family, friends, university, living environment and self.

The results of studies indicate that individuals who have better mental health they are more satisfied from their job and life (Maurya & Agarwal, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017). Maurya and Gill (2012) find in his study that Psychological wellbeing of married and unmarried research scholar was significantly, positively correlated with family, friends, university, living environment and self. On the other hand the psychological distress of married research scholar was significantly, positively correlated with experience and negatively correlated with family, friends, living environment and psychological wellbeing and psychological distress of unmarried research scholar was significantly, negatively correlated with experience, family, friends, university, living environment and psychological wellbeing.

Maurya (2013) find in his study that male and female research scholars were significantly different on the reported levels of income. The male and female research scholars were significantly different on life satisfaction domains, namely, family, friends, and living environment and also on the levels of psychological distress among the mental health dimensions.

Veera, Balaji, Kumar and Subramanian (2012) conducted a study over a sample of 100 students (85 male and 15 female) drawn from an arts college. It was found out that there is a significant negative correlation between self enhancement value domain and almost all dimensions of PWB (personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life) and total PWB. Significant negative correlations were found between security value and negative effect, global wellbeing and age. Significant positive correlations were found between Life satisfaction and income. On the other hand, significant positive correlations were found between self-transcendence values and psychological well being domains viz. personal growth, positive relations and purpose in life. Weak but positive correlation was obtained between self-enhancement value dimension and subjective wellbeing, which imply that individuals who espouse self-enhancement values power and achievement - enjoy higher SWB or hedonic wellbeing. Surprisingly significant negative correlation was found between achievement values a self-enhancement value - and perceived stress. Results indicate that self-enhancement values like power; security and hedonism while providing subjective wellbeing may cause deficient psychological wellbeing. Whereas espousing self-transcendence values like universalism provides greater eudemonic wellbeing and resilience against stress.

Rationale of the Present Study

Based on the above review of studies, it is proposed that-

1. Most studies on this area have been conducted in western settings and also on High School, Intermediate, under-graduate or post-graduate students, the results of which cannot be generalized for those pursuing research in India.
2. No study has yet been conducted on the life satisfaction of research scholars in research institute and its effects on the mental health status in terms of psychological wellbeing and psychological distress.
3. It, therefore, also needs to be examined how the life satisfaction of TISS and IIPS research scholars differently affects their mental health status in terms of psychological wellbeing in positive aspect and psychological distress in negative aspect.

Hypotheses of the study

Formally stated, we have offered the following hypothesis:

1. There would be no significant differences in the age, sex, marital status, category, research experience and income of the TISS and IIPS research scholar.
2. There would be no significant differences in the perception of the satisfaction with family, friends, institute, living environment and self by the TISS & IIPS research scholar.
3. There would be no significant differences in the mental health status in terms of psychological well being and psychological distress among the TISS & IIPS research scholar.
4. Life-Satisfaction with family, friends, university, living environment and self life domains are positively related to psychological wellbeing of TISS & IIPS research scholar.
5. Life-Satisfaction with family, friends, university, living environment and self life domains are negatively related to psychological distress of TISS & IIPS research scholar.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Participants were 144 research scholars from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) & International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS). Out of total 144 participants, 94 participants were taken from IIPS and 50 participants were taken from TISS during the academic session 2012-13.

Measuring Instruments

The following instruments were utilized to measure the variables understudy:

Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction (MSLSS)

The scale, for measuring Multidimensional Students' life satisfaction, developed by Huebner (2001) was used. The original scale consists of 40 items measuring 5 domains of life

satisfaction that is family, friends, university, living environment and self, Responses will be collected on a Likert- type five- point scales ranging from (1) "totally disagree" to (5) "totally agree". On the basis of item total correlation 37 items were retained. The response score range is 37-185. The reliability coefficient of the scale was .88. Dimension wise reliability of the scale is family (0.87), friends (0.75), university (0.75), living environment (0.68) and self (0.84). The original scale which was in English was used after some modification in English.

Mental Health Status

Among the mental health status dimensions, general well-being was assessed on the dimensions of psychological wellbeing (PWB) and psychological distress (PD) Heubeck & Neill (2000). This scale is known as 'General Well-being 20'. It's contains 10 items for psychological wellbeing and 10 for psychological distress. The items are written in a Likert-style format using a scale of one (1) to (5), (1=not at all and 5=very great extent). The reliability coefficient of the scale was psychological wellbeing and psychological distress scale was 0.90 and 0.91 respectively.

For background information total six items were used as socio-economic and demographic variables. Age, gender, marital status, category, research experience (number of years served as research scholar) and income (including mainly fellowship) of the participant's.

Procedure

The TISS & IIPS research scholar participants were approached by the researcher. Participants were allowed to complete the survey privately and were instructed to return their results to the researcher. All 144 participants voluntarily completed and returned the survey while the researcher maintained confidentiality. A non probability sampling method was used.

RESULTS

The data obtained was analyzed for testing the expected patterns of relationships among the variables understudy through computation of χ2-test, t-test, inter-correlations among variables and stepwise regression analysis. The t-test was computed for examining the significance of the differences on the mean scores of the variables understudy as determined by the TISS & IIPS research scholar.

Table: 1. Distribution of Marital Status and Category of Research Scholars (N=144).

Variables	Subgroup	TISS		IIPS		χ2	d.f.	p- value
		n	%	n	%			
Gender	Male	29	58.0	56	59.60	0.033	1	0.479
	Female	21	42.0	38	40.40			
Marital Status	Married	7	14.0	8	8.50	1.054	1	0.227
	Unmarried	43	86.0	86	91.55			
Category	OBC	13	26.0	38	40.40	12.75**	2	0.002
	SC/ST	20	40.0	13	13.80			
	Others	17	34.0	43	45.70			

***p< 0.01 level*

From the table-1, we can observe that there are no significant differences in distribution of gender and marital status in both institutes. It can also be inferred from the chi square test there is a significant difference among TISS and IIPS research scholar in respect category (p-value<0.001).

Table: 2. Mean, S.D., t-Value for Background Variables, Life Satisfaction Domains and Mental Health Status among TISS & IIPS Research Scholars (N=144).

Variable	IIPS (N=94)		TISS (N=50)		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t
Background					
Age	26.94	2.29	27.38	4.15	0.83
Research Experience	1.91	1.02	1.68	1.04	1.30
Income (Including Fellowship)	16679	5867	8000	9787	6.65***
Life Satisfaction Domains					
Family	31.11	4.66	27.94	5.84	3.55***
Friends	32.30	4.95	31.52	5.44	0.87
Institute	29.15	4.26	29.50	4.61	0.46
Living Environment	29.83	5.04	28.70	5.65	1.23
Self	28.60	4.61	28.42	4.45	0.22
Mental Health Status					
Psychological Wellbeing	35.14	7.52	33.08	7.87	1.54
Psychological Distress	23.21	8.13	24.66	7.84	1.03

***p< .001 level (2-tailed test)

Table-2 shows that there was significant difference in the income (t = 6.65; p<.001) received by TISS & IIPS research scholar. There was significant difference between the TISS & IIPS research scholar with regard to life satisfaction domain w.r.t. family (t =3.55, p<0.001).

Table: 3. Correlation between the Background Variables, Life Satisfaction Domains and Mental Health Status among TISS & IIPS Research Scholars (N=144).

Variables	IIPS (N=94)		TISS (N=50)	
	PWB	PD	PWB	PD
Demographic Variables				
Age	0.24*	-0.19	0.09	0.02
Research Experience	0.23*	-0.03	-0.09	-0.01
Income (Including Fellowship)	-0.08	-0.05	0.28*	-0.18
Life Satisfaction Domains				
Family	0.29**	-0.21*	0.01	0.18
Friends	0.40***	-0.35***	0.29*	-0.11
Institute	0.22*	-0.17	0.39**	-0.26
Living Environment	0.40***	-0.34***	0.22	-0.11
Self	0.34***	-0.26*	0.58***	-0.11
Mental Health Status				
Psychological Wellbeing	1.00	-0.45***	1.00	-0.32*

***p< .001 level, **p< .01 level, *p<.05 level (2-tailed test)

Psychological Wellbeing

Table-3 shows that the psychological wellbeing of IIPS research scholar was significantly, positively correlated with age (r = 0.24, p<.05), research experience (r = 0.23, p<.05), family (r = 0.29, p<.001), friends (r = 0.40, p<.001), institute (r = 0.22, p<.01), Living environment (r = 0.40, p<.001) & self (r = 0.34, p<.001); and the psychological wellbeing of TISS research scholar was significantly, positively correlated with income (r = 0.28, p<.05), friends (r = 0.29, p<.01), institute (r = 0.47, p<.01) & self (r = 0.58, p<.001).

Psychological Distress

Table-3 shows that the psychological distress of IIPS research scholar was significantly, negatively correlated with family (r = -0.21, p<.05), friends (r = -0.35, p<.001), Living environment (r = -0.34, p<.01), self (r = -0.26, p<.05) & psychological wellbeing (r = -0.45, p<.001) and the psychological distress of TISS research scholar was significantly, negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing (r = -0.30, p<.001).

Table: 4. Stepwise Regression Analysis of Demographic Variables with Psychological Wellbeing of TISS & IIPS Research Scholar

Variables	R	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	Standardized Coefficient β	t
IIPS Age	0.36	0.05	0.06	0.24	2.33*
TISS Income	0.28	0.06	0.08	0.28	2.05*

*p< .05 level

Psychological Wellbeing

Table-4 shows that among age is significantly, positively predicted 6 percent of variance in psychological wellbeing of IIPS research scholar with 0.24 beta values and the income as scholarship significantly, positively predicted 8 percent of variance in psychological wellbeing of TISS research scholar with 0.28 beta values.

Table: 5. Stepwise Regression Analysis of Life Satisfaction Domain with Psychological Wellbeing of TISS & IIPS Research Scholar

Variables	R	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	Standardized Coefficient β	t
IIPS Living Environment	0.40	0.15	0.16	0.28	2.78**
Friends	0.48	0.21	0.06	0.28	2.75**
TISS Self	0.58	0.33	0.34	0.58	4.96***

p< .01 level,*p< .001 level

Table-5 shows that among the life satisfaction dimensions, living environment significantly, positively predicted 16 percent and friends significantly, positively predicted 6 percent of

variance in psychological wellbeing of IIPS research scholar with a beta value of 0.28 and 0.28 respectively. Also, from Table-5 it is found that among the life satisfaction dimensions, self significantly, positively predicted 34 percent of variance in psychological wellbeing of TISS research scholar with a beta value of 0.58.

Table: 6. Stepwise Regression Analysis of Life Satisfaction Domain with Psychological Distress of IIPS Research Scholar

Variables	R	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	Standardized Coefficient β	t
IIPS					
Friend	0.35	0.12	0.12	-0.25	2.38*
Living environment	0.41	0.16	0.04	-0.23	2.14*

*p< .05 level

Table-6 shows that among the life satisfaction dimensions, friend significantly, negatively predicted 12 percent of variance and living environment significantly, negatively predicted 4 percent of variance in psychological distress of IIPS research scholar with a beta value of -0.25 and -0.23 respectively.

DISCUSSION

Findings of the study provide clear insight into the differences between life satisfaction and mental health status of male and female research scholars in the research institute system. The results demonstrate the significant differences in the scholarship as income between the TISS & IIPS research scholar but as there is no significant differences emerged in their age and research experience. IIPS research scholar income is higher than TISS scholar. There also appeared significant differences between male and female research scholars in life satisfaction domains, mainly family only but there were no significant differences on the domains of friends, institute, living-environment and self between these two groups. The mental health status, there were no significant differences with regard to psychological wellbeing and psychological distress among the scholar of these two institutes.

Findings of the study clearly highlight the role of life satisfaction in determining mental health of research scholars. Psychological wellbeing of IIPS research scholar was significantly, positively correlated with age, research experience, family, friends, institute, Living environment and self and psychological wellbeing of TISS research scholar was significantly, positively correlated with income, friends, institute, and self. The finding of the present study in this way provides evidence that most university student's life satisfaction was positively related with health (Viren, Tomas, Dhachayani, Thambu, Kumaraswami, Debi, & Adrian, 2007).

Psychological distress of IIPS research scholar was significantly, negatively correlated with family, friends, Living environment, self, psychological wellbeing and psychological distress

of TISS research scholar was significantly, negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing. The finding of the present study in this way provides evidence that most university students stress and life satisfaction is correlated (Singer, 2001, Deniz, 2006).

Among the demographic variables age significantly, positively predicted psychological wellbeing of IIPS research scholar and income TISS research scholar. Among the life satisfaction dimensions, living environment and friends significantly, positively predicted psychological wellbeing of IIPS research scholar and self significantly, positively predicted psychological wellbeing of TISS research scholar. Among the life satisfaction dimensions, friend and living environment significantly, negatively predicted psychological distress of IIPS research scholar. The findings of the present study in this way provides support to the evidence that most university student's life circumstances (income, material possessions, marital status and neighbourhood environment) explain 10% of the variation in well-being (Lykken, 1999; Sheldon, 2003) and intentional activities40% of variation in happiness. They include activities like working towards goals, socialising, exercising, engaging in meaningful activities and work, and appreciating life, for example art and culture. Adaptation rarely occurs for these activities and this is the area where well-being can be most influenced. Genetics accounts for 50% of variation in people's happiness although there are also interactions between genetics, upbringing and environment.

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