

Research Paper

Relationship Between Life Satisfaction and Academic Motivation Among College Students in Bangalore: A Correlational Study

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at examining the relationship between life satisfaction and academic motivation among college students in Bangalore. It also explored the differences in these aspects concerning gender and current educational level. A correlational research design was employed, and data were collected from 200 students representing various colleges and universities in Bangalore. Analysis using Spearman's correlation and independent t-tests in Jamovi software revealed a moderately positive correlation between academic motivation and life satisfaction. Interestingly, male students exhibited higher levels of life satisfaction and academic motivation, indicating significant gender differences. However, as hypothesized, no significant differences were found in life satisfaction and academic motivation between undergraduate and postgraduate students. The finding of a moderately positive correlation between academic motivation and life satisfaction highlights their significance on students' achievement. Moreover, the significant gender differences emphasized the need for support and interventions to enhance students' overall satisfaction and motivation, contributing to their academic success.

Keywords: *Academic Motivation, Life Satisfaction, Satisfaction with Life Scale, Self Determination Theory, Gender, Undergraduate, Postgraduate*

College is a crucial phase in a person's career, with significant obstacles, opportunities, and transitions. During this stage, students are exposed to academic rigor while simultaneously undergoing personal and societal adjustments (Khan et al., 2020). Life satisfaction and academic motivation are two essential aspects of this transition.

According to cognitive theory, a person's sense of life satisfaction is "their cognitive judgement regarding comparisons based on the suitability of their own living situations with the norms" (Tiwari et al., 2018). Academic motivation is defined as a student's desire for academics as seen by their approach, persistence, and level of interest when contrasted to a standard of performance or excellence. Life satisfaction levels in college students can have a significant impact on their overall well-being, while academic motivation is crucial to their academic progress (Hu & Luo, 2021).

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Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a psychological framework developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan in the early 1980s, investigates how people are driven and acquire a sense of self. People, according to SDT, have basic psychological needs that drive motivation and impact behavior. SDT divides psychological needs into three categories: autonomy (the want to have control over one's actions and choices), competence (the need to feel competent and accomplished in one's activities), and relatedness (the desire to connect with others). Individuals are more likely to feel less motivated when these three psychological demands are met (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

SDT distinguishes between distinct forms of motivation along a continuum, ranging from intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation. The theory also highlights the significance of autonomy-supportive conditions and autonomy-supportive persons (such as teachers, coaches, and parents) in creating intrinsic drive and well-being. SDT has been used to better understand how to build contexts and situations that promote people's intrinsic motivation and well-being in a variety of sectors, including education, sports, employment, and healthcare. It has considerably influenced psychology, education, and organizational behavior, and it remains a vital paradigm for understanding human motivation and behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Gender Differences in Life Satisfaction and Academic Motivation

Gender is an important component in the association between life satisfaction and academic motivation. Gender disparities in life satisfaction research indicates diverse patterns. According to a prior study by Rand et al. (2020), females reported higher levels of life satisfaction than males. However, social expectations and cultural norms might function as a moderator of life satisfaction.

Academic motivation is impacted by a variety of circumstances, and there can be considerable differences across genders. Some study (Master, 2021; Sivrikaya, 2019) has investigated potential elements that may lead to males having higher academic motivation than girls in certain contexts. It is necessary to recognize that these characteristics are not universally relevant, and there is significant diversity across people. According to research (Zaccoletti et al., 2020; Oishi et al., 1999), teachers may implicitly assume higher academic motivation and accomplishment from male students which may drive them to be more motivated.

While males may be more externally motivated, driven by competitiveness and performance objectives, research (Antaramian, 2017), reveals that females frequently demonstrate higher levels of intrinsic motivation and a greater focus on mastery and learning goals. According to Yu et al. (2020), gender variations exist in academic motivation, with females generally valuing achievement for different reasons than boys.

Educational Level and Its Impact on Life Satisfaction and Academic Motivation

Sany et al. (2021) found that academic motivation can impact students' perceptions of their academic path, this may have implications for life satisfaction. Education not only improves financial opportunities, but it also has an impact on physical and mental health. Higher levels of education, according to Budiharso and Tarman (2020), are related with healthier lives, improved healthcare usage, and greater life expectancy. Better health leads to a greater sense of well-being and life satisfaction.

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Personal contentment and a sense of purpose in life are frequently connected to educational accomplishment. Learning and intellectual progress can increase self-awareness and happiness (De Souza Gonçalves et al., 2021). Individuals frequently acquire a deeper feeling of self-identity and contentment as they advance in their education. According to Ryan and Deci (2017), greater educational degrees frequently contribute to stronger intrinsic desire in studying. Extrinsic motivation is impacted by educational level as well as external rewards such as grades or cash advantages.

Cognitive ability, according to Feraco et al. (2022), is the primary indicator of academic success, encompassing essential thinking, memorization, and information processing skills. Motivation, on the other hand, represents a person's innate drive to achieve specific goals. These two factors, motivation and cognitive ability, are critical indicators of academic accomplishment. Those with lesser levels of education may rely more on external influences for motivation, whereas those with higher levels of education typically find intrinsic joy in their academic efforts.

Rationale

While some examined studies shows that there exists a link between life satisfaction and academic motivation among students. other studies also show that there is no relationship between the two. Bangalore, being a diversified and dynamic educational hub, provides an unique cultural context to explore this relationship as it is known for its vibrant student population and academic institutions, thereby offering a rich and varied sample for the study.

This correlational study sets out to investigate the link between life satisfaction and academic motivation among college students in the city of Bangalore. It aims to elucidate not only the relation between these two key variables, but also the differences in terms of genders and educational levels. Is there a relation between life satisfaction and academic motivation among college students? Is there a difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation levels of undergraduate and postgraduate students? Is there a difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation levels of male and female students?

The research tries to find answers using the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener et al. (1985) and Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) by Vallerand (1993), built on the framework of SDT. The answers to these issues are not only academically interesting, but they also have implications for educators, counselors, and politicians. They can help develop interventions to improve student well-being, motivation, and overall academic achievement.

METHODOLOGY

Research problem/ questions

- Is there a relation between life satisfaction and academic motivation among college students?
- Is there a difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation levels of undergraduate and postgraduate students?
- Is there a difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation levels of male and female students?

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Objectives

- To examine the relationship between life satisfaction and academic motivation among college students.
- To understand the difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation levels of undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- To understand the difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation levels of male and female students.

Hypotheses

- H_{o1} : There is no relation between life satisfaction and academic motivation among college students.
- H_{o2} : There is no difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation of undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- H_{o3} : There is no difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation of male and female students.

Operational definition

- **Life Satisfaction:** It refers to having an overall positive attitude about one's own life in almost all critical areas of life.
- **Academic Motivation:** The amount of effort put forth by students, their ability to manage time, the extracurricular activities they choose to engage in, and their persistence in the face of challenges.

Variables of the study

Life Satisfaction, Academic Motivation, Gender, Education

Sample

The population selected for the study were undergraduate and postgraduate students pursuing their studies in colleges/universities in Bangalore. The age group of the sample was 18-26 years. The sample comprised of 200 participants. Data was collected from 100 undergraduate students (50 male and 50 female students) and 100 postgraduate students (50 male and 50 female students). In this research study, a convenient sampling, a non-probability sampling method was employed for participant selection. This approach was chosen for its practicality and ease of access to individuals who were available and willing to participate.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Male and female students, belonging to the age group of 18-26, pursuing undergraduate or postgraduate degree in any college/ university in Bangalore. Working population and persons with disability.

Instruments

Two measures were used in this study,

1. **Satisfaction With Life scale (SWLS):** The Satisfaction with Life Scale, developed by Diener et al. (1985), Cronbach alpha 0.801, was used to assess life satisfaction of the students. A 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). Participants indicate

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how much they agree or disagree with each of the five items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree.

- 2. Academic Motivation Scale (AMS-C):** Academic Motivation Scale (College form), developed by Vallerand, R. J. (1993), Cronbach alpha 0.800, is a legitimate and reliable method for evaluating students' motivation supported by the self-determination theory. It has recently been used in high school and college education (Orsini et al., 2015). This scale assesses seven types of constructs: intrinsic motivation towards knowledge, accomplishments, and stimulation, as well as external, introjected and identified regulations, and finally, amotivation. It contains 28 items (4 items per subscale) assessed on a 7-point scale.

Procedure

Before beginning the study, the researcher obtained Institutional Review Board approval for conducting the research. Participants who met the inclusion criteria were provided with an informed consent. This consent form outlined their voluntary participation in the research, along with ethical considerations regarding their involvement, including the assurance of data confidentiality and the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point. Once participants had provided their consent to participate, they proceeded to complete the Google Form questionnaire which consisted of the SWLS and AMS-C scales. Data was collected from a sample of 200 students from various colleges and universities in Bangalore. The collected quantitative data was later analyzed using Jamovi software.

Analysis

The research consisted of three null hypotheses, each formulated based on the objectives- There is no relation between life satisfaction and academic motivation among college students; There is no difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation of undergraduate and postgraduate students; There is no difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation of male and female students. The research used a quantitative approach to rigorously evaluate and test each of its objectives. Spearman's correlation was used to measure the relationship between life satisfaction and academic motivation. An independent T-test, Student's t was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference between the scores of undergraduate and postgraduate students, male and female students.

Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent to participate was taken from all the participants.
- Participants were informed that participation in this research was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any stage if they wished to.
- The researcher debriefed the participants about the purpose of the study and provided all necessary instructions.
- The participants were notified that the details, information, and results would be kept anonymous and used for research purposes alone.
- All works of other authors used in any part of the study were cited according to the guidelines.
- The highest possible level of objectivity was maintained throughout the research.

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RESULTS

Table No. 1 Descriptive statistics of the questionnaire

Academic Motivation Scale		Satisfaction With Life Scale	
N	200	N	200
Median	150.0	Median	26.0
IQR	24.00	IQR	5.00
Minimum	75	Minimum	10
Maximum	193	Maximum	35
Skewness	-0.624	Skewness	-0.816
Std. error skewness	0.172	Std. error skewness	0.172
Kurtosis	0.874	Kurtosis	0.798
Std. error kurtosis	0.342	Std. error kurtosis	0.342
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.973	Shapiro-Wilk W	0.953
Shapiro-Wilk p	< .001	Shapiro-Wilk p	< .001
Cronbach's α	0.800	Cronbach's α	0.801

The research was conducted on a population sample of 200 college students, out of which 100 were undergraduate students and 100 postgraduate students. Based on gender, the sample was further classified into 100 male and 100 female students who belong to the age group of 18-26 years, residing in Bangalore.

Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand, R. J.,1992), Cronbach alpha 0.800, was used to measure motivation levels and Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), Cronbach alpha 0.801, was used to measure life satisfaction of the students. The questionnaires were compiled into a Google form and circulated among the population sample. Correlation test was used to express the relationship between the variables and an Independent T-Test was used to understand the differences in academic motivation and life satisfaction based on gender and education.

The descriptive statistic for academic motivation M(IQR)=150.0(24.00), Shapiro-Wilk W value was 0.973 and p value <.001. For life satisfaction, M(IQR)=26.0(5.00), Shapiro-Wilk W value was 0.953 and p value <.001. Based on the normality test, it was concluded that the population is not normally distributed. Therefore, a non-parametric test was used.

Table No. 2 Correlation between academic motivation and life satisfaction

Variables	Academic Motivation	Life Satisfaction
Academic Motivation	—	
Life Satisfaction	0.650***	—

The correlation coefficient, Spearman rho= 0.650 indicates a moderately positive relationship between these two variables life satisfaction and academic motivation. This suggests that higher levels of academic motivation are associated with increased levels of life satisfaction. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no relation between life satisfaction and academic motivation among college students is rejected.

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Table No. 3 T-Test results on basis of education- Postgraduate (PG) and Undergraduate (UG)

Variables	Statistic	df	p	Group descriptives		Mean difference	SE difference
				PG	UG		
Academic Motivation	0.943	198	0.347	148.1	145.5	2.580	2.587
Life Satisfaction	1.511	198	0.132	25.6	24.6	0.970	0.614

A value of $T(df)=0.943(198)$, $p=0.347$ for academic motivation and $T(df)=1.511(198)$, $p=0.132$ for life satisfaction on Student's t-test suggests that the result is not statistically significant. The group descriptives shows that there is little difference in the academic motivation and life satisfaction of Postgraduate(PG) and Undergraduate(UG) students. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant differences in the life satisfaction and academic motivation of undergraduate and postgraduate students is not rejected.

Table No. 4 T-Test results on basis of genders- Male(M) and Female(F)

Variables	Statistic	df	p	Group descriptives		Mean difference	SE difference
				M	F		
Academic Motivation	4.95	198	< .001	153.2	140.4	12.80	2.587
Life Satisfaction	4.58	198	< .001	26.5	23.7	2.81	0.614

A value of $T(df)=4.95(198)$, $p < .001$ for academic motivation and $T(df)=4.58(198)$, $p < .001$ for life satisfaction on Student's t-test suggests that the result is statistically significant. The group descriptives shows that Male(M) students have high academic motivation and life satisfaction compared to Female(F) students. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant differences in the life satisfaction and academic motivation of male and female students is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The study aimed at examining the relationship between life satisfaction and academic motivation among college students. It also explored the difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation levels of undergraduate and postgraduate students and the difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation levels of male and female students. The presented results highlight the relationship between academic motivation and life satisfaction among college students and provide insights into gender and educational level differences.

Ho 1: There is no relation between life satisfaction and academic motivation among college students.

The correlation coefficient of Spearman $\rho = 0.650$ indicates a moderately positive relationship between academic motivation and life satisfaction. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This also aligns with SDT, as achieving competence in academic pursuits

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contributing to a sense of accomplishment and well-being. A study by Ryan and Deci (2017) that connects better academic motivation with higher life satisfaction further supports the SDT framework, emphasizing the importance of intrinsic motivation and the satisfaction of psychological needs. This shows that students who are more academically driven have higher levels of life satisfaction. In contrast, recent research (Hu and Luo, 2021; Stover et al., 2012) has called into doubt whether academic motivation accurately predicts academic performance. These studies highlight the fact that academic motivation is a multidimensional concept that may not be a direct predictor of academic accomplishment.

Ho 2: There is no difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation of undergraduate and postgraduate students.

A value of $T(df)=0.943(198)$, $p=0.347$ for academic motivation and $T(df)=1.511(198)$, $p=0.132$ on Student's t-test suggests that the result is not statistically significant. The results indicate that there is little difference in academic motivation and life satisfaction between undergraduate and postgraduate students. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Previous study (Sany et al., 2021; Budiharso and Tarman, 2020) however, reveals that education can have a major influence on life satisfaction. Higher levels of education have been related to improved health outcomes, socioeconomic opportunities, and life satisfaction. The acknowledgment of the potential influence of education on life satisfaction aligns with SDT, particularly the competence aspect. Higher levels of education are associated with improved life satisfaction, reflecting the fulfillment of competence needs through academic achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Ho 3: There is no difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation of male and female students.

A value of $T(df)=4.95(198)$, $p < .001$ for academic motivation and $T(df)=4.58(198)$, $p < .001$ for life satisfaction on Student's t-test suggests that the result is statistically significant. Male students had greater levels of academic motivation and life satisfaction than female students. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This is consistent with previous results by Master (2021) and Sivrikaya (2019) that men may have more external drive and competitiveness, which might contribute to higher academic motivation. In contrast, females tend to have higher levels of intrinsic drive and a larger emphasis on mastery and learning goals. These gender differences appear to be influenced by social expectations and cultural norms (Diener et al., 1985). This difference implies that the link between gender and academic motivation is context-dependent, impacted by cultural norms as well as individual characteristics. The explanation for gender differences in academic motivation, citing external drive and competitiveness in males and intrinsic drive and emphasis on mastery in females, aligns with the SDT principles of autonomy and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Social expectations and cultural norms influencing gender differences in motivation emphasize the importance of considering external factors in understanding individual motivation within a cultural context.

Implications, limitations and future direction

In summary, this research provides valuable insights into the interplay of academic motivation, life satisfaction, gender, and educational levels among college students. While the findings often align with existing research, they also emphasize the complexity of these relationships. Understanding the relation between life satisfaction and academic motivation can guide educators in designing more effective interventions and programs aimed at enhancing both academic motivation and students' overall well-being. Identifying gender

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differences in academic motivation and life satisfaction allows institutions to provide tailored support and resources to meet the unique needs of male and female students.

The study's correlational approach primarily establishes relationships, leaving room for future research to delve into the underlying causes and perspectives through qualitative methods. It is important to note that the study relied on self-report measures for life satisfaction and academic motivation, potentially introducing response bias. This means that participants might provide inaccurate responses due to social desirability or other factors. Furthermore, the study's conclusions are most relevant to Bangalore and its college students, and generalizing to other regions or countries with different educational systems and cultural norms should be approached cautiously. Future studies should explore these aspects in different cultural and contextual settings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how these variables interrelate.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion drawn from the study is that there is a moderately positive relationship between life satisfaction and academic motivation. There is a significant difference in the life satisfaction and academic motivation of male and female students. There is no significant differences in the life satisfaction and academic motivation of undergraduate and postgraduate students.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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