

## Cognitive Styles and Life Satisfaction among College Students

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### ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores how cognitive styles (systematic and intuitive) relate to life satisfaction in college students. It investigates whether these cognitive styles are significantly linked to life satisfaction within genders and between male and female students. The study involved 130 college students (65 male and 65 female) who completed assessments measuring their cognitive styles and life satisfaction—an analysis using correlation and t-tests to identify relationships and differences. Results showed no significant connection between systematic thinking style and life satisfaction in either gender. However, only a marginally significant positive correlation was noted between intuitive thinking style and life satisfaction in female students. No such correlation was found in male students. Gender didn't significantly affect thinking styles or life satisfaction levels. These findings highlight the nuanced relationship between cognitive styles and life satisfaction, suggesting a minor impact of intuitive thinking style on life satisfaction among female college students, with systematic thinking style and gender differences showing no significant impact.

**Keywords:** *Cognitive Styles, Systematic Style, Intuitive Style, Life Satisfaction, College Students*

According to Curry (1983), cognitive styles are unique information-processing strategies that depend on perception, reasoning, and judgment. They encompass preferences, attitudes, and tactics governing perception, discernment, memory, and problem-solving. Stanovich and West (1998) further delineate cognitive styles as problem-solving rules or broader traits like dogmatism, crucial in fields such as industrial psychology and education. Recent work by Cools and Van den Broeck (2007) focuses on System 1 and System 2 thinking via the Cognitive Styles Indicator (CSI).

However, the question of whether specific elements or high-level cognitive styles better predict decision-making remains unresolved (Kozhevnikov, 2007). Cognitive styles are part of learning styles, explaining how individuals approach learning based on various stimuli. They manifest internally as structured thought contents and externally in reasoning, language use, and relationships, impacting decision-making (Allinson & Hayes, 1996; Leonard et al., 1999).

Historically rooted in Jung's psychological types and furthered by researchers like Witkin, Klein, Gardner, and Kagan, cognitive styles bridge cognitive and personality studies. They

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influence learning preferences, with field-dependent and field-independent learners preferring different approaches. The systematic and intuitive styles, akin to left-brain and right-brain thinking, also shape cognitive processes, although early studies often favored one style over the other.

According to Diener and others, cognitive styles and other aspects of life have an impact on life satisfaction, which encompasses various factors like mood, relationships, work, and health. Integrating an understanding of cognitive styles and life satisfaction can enhance learning, decision-making, and overall well-being, offering insights into how individuals process information and evaluate their lives.

Abdel-Khalek et al. (2023) studied the Big Five personality traits' influence on life satisfaction in Egyptian college students (N = 1418). Men scored higher in extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness, while women scored higher in neuroticism and agreeableness. Strong positive correlations were found, except for neuroticism, which negatively impacted life satisfaction the most.

Alagh and Chaturvedi (2023) studied resilience and life satisfaction in the young-old age group (aged 65 to 75) in urban Delhi. They found average resilience levels and above-average life satisfaction among participants. There was a weak positive correlation between the two traits, suggesting no significant association in older adults, regardless of gender.

Bavolar and Bacikova-Sleskova (2020) studied decision-making styles and mental health in university students across two studies. They identified three decision profiles and found that the rational/nonavoidant profile had the best mental health outcomes. Decision styles remained stable but didn't predict changes in mental health. These findings were replicated in a broader sample, emphasizing the role of decision styles in mental health outcomes tailored to each group's characteristics.

Ojha and Shrivastava (2017) investigated the impact of emotional well-being on life satisfaction in university students. They found a positive and significant correlation between emotional well-being and life satisfaction ( $r = 0.276^{**}$ ), highlighting the importance of addressing emotional well-being to improve overall life satisfaction among this population.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### ***Objectives:***

- To find out the relationship between cognitive style (systematic style) and life satisfaction among female college students.
- To find out the relationship between cognitive style (systematic style) and life satisfaction among male college students.
- To find out the relationship between cognitive style (intuitive style) and life satisfaction among female college students.
- To find out the relationship between cognitive style (intuitive style) and life satisfaction among male college students.

### ***Hypothesis:***

- There will be significant relationship between cognitive style (systematic style) and life satisfaction among female college students.

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- There will be significant relationship between cognitive style (systematic style) and life satisfaction among male college students.
- There will be significant relationship between cognitive style (intuitive style) and life satisfaction among female college students.
- There will be significant relationship between cognitive style (intuitive style) and life satisfaction among male college students.

### *Sample:*

- Size: 130 college students (65 female and 65 male)
- Inclusive Criteria: College students willing to participate.
- Exclusive Criteria: College students with mental disorders.
- Sampling Technique: Convenience Sampling

### *Tools for Data Collection:*

- Cognitive Style Inventory by Dr. Praveen Kumar Jha
- Life Satisfaction Scale by Dr. Hardeo Ojha

### *Variables:*

#### **Independent Variable:**

- Cognitive Styles
- Systematic Style
- Intuitive Style

#### **Dependent Variable:**

- Life Satisfaction

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Table 1: Correlation value between cognitive style (systematic style) and life satisfaction among female college students*

Variables	N	r	p
Cognitive Styles	65	.134	insig
Life Satisfaction	65		

*Table 2: Correlation value between cognitive style (systematic style) and life satisfaction among male college students*

Variables	N	r	p
Cognitive Styles	65	-.080	sig***
Life Satisfaction	65		

*Table 3: Correlation value between cognitive style (intuitive style) and life satisfaction among female college students*

Variables	N	r	p
Cognitive Styles	65	.244	insig
Life Satisfaction	65		

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**Table 4: Correlation value between cognitive style (intuitive style) and life satisfaction among male college students**

Variables	N	r	p
Cognitive Styles	65	.004	insig
Life Satisfaction	65		

According to Table 1,  $r$  is equal to 0.134, meaning the correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level ( $p = 0.288$ ), indicating no statistically significant relationship between life satisfaction and systematic style among female college students.

According to Table 2,  $r$  is equal to -0.080, meaning the correlation is significant at both levels (0.05 and 0.01), indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship between life satisfaction and systematic style among male college students.

Table 1 indicates an insignificant correlation (0.134) between systematic cognitive style and life satisfaction among female college students, suggesting no direct impact of systematic thinking on their life satisfaction. Conversely, Table 2 shows a significant negative correlation (-0.80) for male students, implying a slight decrease in life satisfaction with increased systematic thinking, although other factors likely play a more substantial role. Prior research presents mixed findings on this topic. For example, Karataş et al. (2021) reported medium-level correlations between life satisfaction and certain thinking styles but found low correlations with factors like COVID-19 fear and gender. Zhang and Sternberg (2005) associated lower cognitive complexity thinking styles with lower self-esteem. González (2024) identified a positive correlation between abstract thinking and well-being. Additionally, Kuan (2022) suggested thinking styles mediate the relationship between time perspective and well-being. Overall, the relationship between systematic thinking and life satisfaction remains complex and warrants further investigation.

As evident from Table 3,  $r$  equals 0.244, meaning this correlation is not significant, indicating no statistically significant relationship between life satisfaction and intuitive style among female college students.

According to Table 4,  $r$  equals 0.004, meaning this correlation is not significant at any level, indicating no statistically significant linear relationship between life satisfaction and intuitive style among male college students.

Table 3 reveals an insignificant correlation (0.244) between intuitive cognitive style and life satisfaction among female college students, contrary to the hypothesis predicting a significant relationship. This result suggests that intuitive thinking does not significantly influence life satisfaction in this demographic, emphasizing the need for further research with larger samples and refined methodologies. Similarly, Table 4 shows an insignificant correlation (0.004) between intuitive cognitive style and life satisfaction among male college students, indicating no direct influence of intuitive thinking on their life satisfaction. These findings align with Salo and Allwood (2011), who found no significant relationship between decision-making styles and life satisfaction among investigators, suggesting gender is not a significant factor. Yon et al. (2023) also noted a weak or non-existent relationship between East Asian cultural values and life satisfaction among male students. Overall, the lack of significant correlation between intuitive thinking and life satisfaction among college students is supported by previous research.

### ***Implications:***

These findings suggest that interventions to improve life satisfaction among college students might benefit from focusing on intuitive thinking, especially for females. Educators and counselors could integrate strategies that enhance intuitive processing and decision-making skills, acknowledging individual cognitive differences, to better promote well-being in this demographic.

### ***Future recommendations:***

Future research could explore other factors that may mediate or moderate the relationship between cognitive styles and life satisfaction among college students. Longitudinal studies could also provide insight into the stability and potential changes in cognitive styles and their impact on life satisfaction over time.

### ***Limitations:***

One of the limitations of this study is the reliance on self-report measures, which may introduce response bias. Additionally, the sample size was relatively small, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future research with larger and more diverse samples is needed to validate and extend these findings.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study investigated the correlation between cognitive styles (systematic and intuitive) and life satisfaction among college students using self-report assessments on 130 participants (65 males and 65 females). The findings indicated no significant relationship between systematic thinking style and life satisfaction among females but a significant correlation among males. Similarly, there were no significant correlations between intuitive thinking style and life satisfaction for both genders. Furthermore, no significant differences were observed in cognitive styles or life satisfaction levels between male and female students. These results suggest that cognitive styles may not vary significantly by gender and that interventions targeting intuitive thinking could enhance well-being among college students, particularly females.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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