



The Relationship between Self-Concept and Life Satisfaction Among Youth: A Quantitative Correlational Study

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the relationship between self-concept and life satisfaction among the youth. The research focuses on examining whether the two variables are correlated and if each of them has an impact on the other. The study collected data from 100 college-going students in India, aged between 18-25 years, with an equal representation of both genders. Self-Concept Questionnaire and Life Satisfaction Scale were used as instruments to measure the two variables. The results indicated that the average self-concept score is higher than the average life satisfaction score, and there was less variability in self-concept scores than life satisfaction scores. The study also found significant gender differences in the levels of self-concept and life satisfaction among the youth. The findings provided insights into how self-concept influences life satisfaction and how different factors affect them, which can help in developing interventions to improve the well-being of the youth.

Keywords: Self-Concept, Life Satisfaction, Youth, Correlation

Introduction

Self-concept broadly can be termed as one's perception of oneself (Shavelson et al., 1976), these perceptions are usually formed due to continuous experiences and interpretation of the environment, influenced especially by evaluation of society, reinforcements and attribution of one's own behaviour. The self-concept has a dynamic structure that serves. With continuous advancements in unravelling the dynamic nature of self-concept, three major spectacularises came into being. One, self-concept can't be explored as a unitary entity in a vacuum; second, the functioning of self-concept is an interplay of self-serving motives and social situations; and third, behaviour cannot be observed as a direct and overt consequence of self-concept. Instead, it subtly manifests itself in personality, social comparison choices, mood and affect, self-presentation, attribution, etc.

Self-concept is described as a person's collection of beliefs and attitudes about themselves. It encompasses how they perceive their skills, personality, appearance, and values. Existence satisfaction, on the other hand, is an individual's overall sense of well-being and contentment with their existence. These two ideas are intertwined because one's self-concept influences their level of life happiness. The rationale of this paper is to study the relationship between self-concept and life satisfaction, specifically how a positive self-concept can contribute to improved life satisfaction.

Self-concept is a multifaceted construct that evolves over time as a result of interactions with the world, including social, cultural, and personal experiences. It has a significant impact on how a person thinks, feels,

and acts. Positive self-concept is linked to high self-esteem and self-worth, which leads to improved psychological and physical health outcomes, including greater life satisfaction.

Positive experiences like praise, encouragement, and support can result in a positive self-concept, whereas negative experiences like judgment, rejection, and neglect can result in a negative self-concept. Work, relationships, and other life events in adulthood can all have an influence on one's self-concept. A successful job, for example, can lead to a positive self-concept, whereas a failed relationship can lead to a negative self-concept.

Satisfaction with life is a person's subjective assessment of their total life experience. It is a measure of how happy and content people are with their lives, taking into account factors such as relationships, employment, health, and personal development. A variety of variables impact life satisfaction, including personal circumstances, individual differences, and cultural values. People with strong social support networks, satisfying jobs, and good physical health, for example, tend to report higher levels of satisfaction with life. Individuals with a positive outlook on life, who are grateful for what they have, and who can deal with stress and adversity have greater levels of life satisfaction.

The usual way to assess life satisfaction is by requesting individuals to indicate their level of contentment with their lives as a whole on a scale from 1 to 10 or to respond to a series of questions that assess their subjective well-being. Researchers and policymakers often use measures of life satisfaction to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and policies aimed at promoting well-being and improving quality of life.

Satisfaction with life is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "How favourably an individual appraises the overall calibre of their life as a complete entity." In other terms, it is a person's subjective assessment of their own well-being and life experiences. The World Health Organization recognizes satisfaction with life as an essential component of health and well-being. Life satisfaction is regarded as one of the most important indicators of subjective well-being, which is related to general health and quality of life. The World Health Organization has created a number of tools and frameworks for measuring subjective well-being and living satisfaction, such as the World Health Survey and the WHO-5 Well-being Index.

Satisfaction with life and self-concept are concepts that are closely linked. Self-concept refers to a person's beliefs, attitudes, and opinions about themselves, whereas life happiness refers to a person's overall assessment of their life. A study released in the journal *Personality and Social Psychology Review* found that self-awareness is related to satisfaction with life. The study discovered that people with a better sense of self-awareness have higher levels of life satisfaction. A positive self-concept can lead to increased life happiness, whereas a negative self-concept can lead to decreased satisfaction with life.

It is essential to note that early childhood experiences, family dynamics, cultural values, and societal expectations can all have an impact on concept of self. As a result, improving one's self-concept and, eventually, life satisfaction may necessitate internal reflection, therapy, and/or environmental changes.

A strong relationship exists between concept of self and satisfaction with life, according to research. People who have a positive view of themselves and feel good about their worth tend to have higher life satisfaction levels. In contrast, those who have negative self-perceptions and low self-esteem report lower levels of satisfaction in life. A recent study that appeared in the *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* found that the average self-esteem score of American college students is 3.82 out of 5 and that those with higher self-esteem tend to have higher life satisfaction levels. The study also discovered that people with greater self-esteem have better levels of life satisfaction.

The worldwide average satisfaction with life score is 5.4 out of 10 according to the World Happiness Report 2021. According to the report, life satisfaction is closely related to economic, social, and environmental factors such as income, social support, and freedom to make life decisions. In several ways, self-concept influences living satisfaction. Individuals who have a positive self-concept are more self-assured, competent, and satisfied with their skills and accomplishments. They are also more likely to participate in meaningful pursuits that align with their beliefs and interests, which can lead to greater life satisfaction. Individuals with a negative self-concept, on the other hand, may battle with feelings of inadequacy, low self-worth, and a lack of purpose or direction, all of which can lead to lower life satisfaction.

Review of Literature

Choi (2020) explored whether intermediate levels of self-efficacy and self-concept were more closely related to academic achievement than general or particular levels. The study included 230 college students who freely completed tests. According to the findings, more particular self-efficacy and self-concept were significantly related, and academic and specific self-concepts were important predictors of term grades.

Heng, Fulmer, Blau et.al (2020) examined the objectives, significance of life, social backing, and contentment levels of teenagers in Singapore and Israel. The findings suggested that Singaporean adolescents had four purpose categories, including no direction, self-centred, others-centered, and a combination of self- and others-centered, while Israeli teenagers had three purpose categories. Israeli youth reported higher levels of life satisfaction compared to their Singaporean counterparts, and the lack of purpose direction had an adverse impact on satisfaction with life. The research discovered that life meaning, support from parents, and support from teachers were positive factors in predicting life happiness.

Zhou, Shek, and Zhu (2020) A two-wave longitudinal study was carried out in mainland China, involving junior high school students, to examine the connection between positive youth development (PYD) qualities and psychological well-being in adolescence. The findings revealed that PYD qualities were strong predictors of satisfaction with life and hopelessness, both at the same time and over time. The research showed that hopelessness during Wave 2 mediated the association between PYD qualities during Wave 1 and satisfaction with life during Wave 2, while satisfaction with life during Wave 2 did not mediate the relationship between PYD qualities during Wave 1 and despair during Wave 2.

Wendt, Costa, Poletto et.al (2019) conducted a study in Brazil to investigate how stressful events impact life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect in socially disadvantaged children and adolescents. The research revealed that children who resided with their families experienced fewer stressful events and had better positive outcomes than those living in institutions. The study emphasizes the crucial role of family life in promoting positive development.

Arens, Schmidt, and Preckel (2019) investigated the longitudinal relationships between academic self-concept, intrinsic worth, and achievement value in maths, German, and English among 2,116 German secondary school students. Academic self-concept was found to be positively connected to subsequent intrinsic and accomplishment value in maths and English, while intrinsic and achievement value were positively related to later academic self-concept in German.

Kumar and Priyadarshini (2018) studied self-efficacy regarding gender, age, and educational qualification among students entering the workforce. They found positive relationships between overall quality of life, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.

Dudovitz, Perez-Aguilar, Kim, et.al (2017) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between school surroundings, adolescent self-concept, social networks, and substance use among young people. The study discovered that peer groups and self-concept impact substance use decisions.

Susperreguy, Davis-Kean, Duckworth et. al (2017) did a research project to evaluate the association between self-concept of competence in maths and reading and subsequent achievement across varied demographics. According to the findings, self-concept of ability in maths and reading predicts future achievement at all levels of performance.

Jaiswal and Choudhuri (2017) Male and female secondary school pupils were researched for the association between academic self-concept and academic accomplishment. The study found a link between academic self-concept and academic accomplishment that was stronger in female students, as well as gender variations in academic self-concept.

Mugabe, Brug, and Catling (2016) carried out a study to look into academic motivation, support systems, self-esteem, and social mobility across three different student cohorts in higher education. The study comprised 267 students from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Uganda, and it discovered significant cultural differences in intrinsic, extrinsic, and intergenerational upward mobility scores between the three cohorts. Intergenerational upward socioeconomic mobility was found to be intellectually engaging and highly related to academic self-esteem in the study.

Chui and Wong (2016) The study looked at the relationship between gender, happiness, and life satisfaction among Hong Kong adolescents and discovered that self-esteem and a feeling of purpose in life were associated to higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction. Having

more close friends was related with more pleasure but not always with greater life satisfaction. Gender differences in academic achievement have different effects on happiness and life satisfaction.

Satisi, Uysal, Yilmaz et.al (2016) performed a study to look into the relationship between social safety, psychological vulnerability, and life happiness among Turkish college students. According to the findings, life satisfaction had an important role in moderating the connection between social safety and psychological vulnerability. According to the findings, having a higher degree of life satisfaction may improve perceptions of social safety while decreasing psychological vulnerability.

Hawi and Samaha (2016) A study was carried out to investigate the relationship between self-esteem, life satisfaction, and addictive social media use. The findings demonstrated a negative association between addictive social media use and self-esteem, but a good relationship between self-esteem and life happiness.

Cirkrikci and Odaci (2016) conducted a study to look at the relationship between metacognitive awareness, perceived self-efficacy, and life happiness in high school students. The research found a link between life satisfaction and metacognitive awareness, as well as subjective self-efficacy. Furthermore, metacognitive awareness and perceived self-efficacy were found to be significant determinants of life satisfaction in teenagers. Furthermore, the study found no significant gender differences in participants' life satisfaction, metacognitive awareness, or self-efficacy.

Azizli, Atkinson, Baughman, et al. (2015) Researchers investigated the links between general self-efficacy, future preparation, contemplation of future repercussions, and life satisfaction in a survey of university students. The New General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Continuous Planning Scale, the Consideration of Future Consequences Scale, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale were completed by 242 individuals. All factors were shown to have significant associations, with general self-efficacy having the largest correlation with life satisfaction, followed by the Consideration of Future Consequences Scale and the Continuous Planning Scale.

Kong, Ding, and Zhao (2015) A study was undertaken in Chinese undergraduate students to investigate how social support and self-esteem influence the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction. The study included 427 people who filled out the Gratitude Questionnaire, the

Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale. The findings demonstrated that social support totally mediated the association between gratitude and life satisfaction, and that there was a considerable path from gratitude to life satisfaction via both social support and self-esteem. Furthermore, the study discovered gender disparities in the relationship between gratitude, social support, and life happiness.

Methodology

Aim of the Study: To study the effect of self-concept on life satisfaction among the youth.

Hypothesis :

1. Ho: There will be significant gender difference in the levels of self-concept and life satisfaction among youth.

2. Ho1: There will be significant relationship between self-concept and life satisfaction among youth.

Sample: The numerical data was collected from college going individuals between the ages 18-25 years, using the simple random sampling technique. The sample size was 100. Data was collected from 50 males and 50 females, all of whom are residents of India.

Tools: Two instruments have been used i.e., Self-Concept Questionnaire by Saraswat (1984), and the Life Satisfaction Scale by Hardeo Ojha (2015).

Result

Table 1: t-test on Self Concept and Life Satisfaction

		Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error of mean	Level of significance
Self-Concept	Male	136.82	15.50	2.19	0.001
	Female	133.46	13.25	1.87	
Life Satisfaction	Male	63.70	8.92	1.26	0.001
	Female	62.14	11.41	1.61	

Table 2: Correlation between Self Concept and Life Satisfaction

		Self-Concept	Life Satisfaction
Self-Concept	Pearson Correlation	1	.508**
	Sig. (2 – tailed)		<.001
Life Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.508**	1
	Sig. (2 – tailed)	<.001	

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between self-concept and life satisfaction among young individuals, with the premise that there would be significant gender differences in self-concept and life satisfaction levels. The null hypothesis was accepted based on the data obtained and statistical analyses performed. Males had a mean score of 136.82, while females had a score of 133.46. The difference in means was statistically significant at the 0.001 level. Furthermore, males and females had significantly different standard deviations, with males having a greater standard deviation of 15.50 compared to girls' 13.25. Similarly, the male mean score for life satisfaction was 63.70, while the female mean score was 62.14. The difference in means was statistically significant at 0.001, and females had a greater standard deviation than males. As a result, it is possible to conclude that there is a considerable gender difference in the levels of self-concept and life satisfaction among youth.

In a sample of Spanish teenagers, **Morales and Finch (2015)** discovered that adolescent females showed lower levels of self-concept than boys, implying that gender disparities in self-concept may be related to societal and cultural expectations of gender roles. Another study, by **Bostwick and Belch (2016)**, discovered that transgender youth exhibited poorer self-esteem and higher levels of anxiety and despair than cisgender youth. The study emphasises the relevance of including gender identification in research on juvenile self-concept and mental health. These findings indicate gender disparities in self-concept and life satisfaction among youth and show that gender-related factors such as social expectations, coping methods, and gender identity may play a role in shaping these outcomes.

The study sought to evaluate the relationship between adolescent self-concept and life satisfaction, with the second hypothesis predicting a strong association between the two variables. The hypothesis was accepted based on the obtained data and statistical analysis, with a moderate positive correlation coefficient of 0.508 and a statistically significant p-value of less than 0.001. A comparable study conducted among Chinese high school students by **Huang and Zhang (2018)** found a positive association between self-concept and life satisfaction, showing that enhancing self-concept can lead to improved life happiness. Furthermore, **Khasho,**

Nouri, and Ghasemzadeh (2020) discovered that self-concept was a major predictor of life satisfaction among Iranian high school students, emphasising the need of encouraging positive self-concept in order to improve well-being. These studies complement the current

study's findings and demonstrate that self-concept is an important element in fostering favourable outcomes during adolescence, emphasising the benefits of interventions aimed at improving self-concept.

Conclusion

Based on the data collected and analysed, it can be seen that male youth have higher levels of self-concept and life satisfaction than female youth. However, it is important to remember that these are group-level differences and do not necessarily apply to each individual.

It is recommended that youth, regardless of gender, focus on building a positive self-concept and increasing their life satisfaction. This can be done through a variety of activities such as setting goals and working towards them, engaging in activities that bring joy and fulfilment, building positive relationships, and seeking support when needed.

Additionally, it may be helpful for parents, educators, and other adults working with youth to be aware of gender differences in self-concept and life satisfaction and to provide support and resources that address these differences. It is important to promote gender equality and challenge societal and cultural expectations that may contribute to gender disparities in well-being.

Based on the **positive correlation** found between **self-concept and life satisfaction** here are some recommendations for youth which may be considered:

1. Encouraging the development of a positive self-concept through activities that promote self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-confidence. This may include individual or group therapy, self-reflection exercises, or skill-building workshops.
2. Promoting healthy coping strategies for dealing with stress, negative emotions, and challenging situations. This may include teaching mindfulness techniques, stress-management strategies, or problem-solving skills.
3. Fostering positive social support networks among youth, which can help to promote feelings of belonging, connectedness, and emotional well-being.
4. Providing education and resources on topics related to mental health and well-being, such as identifying symptoms of depression and anxiety, seeking help when needed, and promoting healthy behaviours and lifestyles.
5. Encouraging youth to engage in activities that promote their overall well-being, such as exercise, healthy eating, creative pursuits, or community involvement.

Satisfaction with life is a person's subjective assessment of their total life experience. It is a measure of how happy and content people are with their lives, taking into account factors such as relationships, employment, health, and personal development. A variety of variables impact life satisfaction, including personal circumstances, individual differences, and cultural values. People with strong social support networks, satisfying jobs, and good physical health, for example, tend to report higher levels of satisfaction with life. Individuals with a positive outlook on life, who are grateful for what they have, and who can deal with stress and adversity have greater levels of satisfaction with life.

Overall, while self-concept is not solely responsible for life satisfaction, it can have a substantial impact on an individual's perception of their own life satisfaction. Individuals may be able to improve their overall sense of well-being and life satisfaction by developing a positive self-concept.

The study's conclusion emphasises the relevance of self-concept in influencing life happiness among young people and shows that interventions aiming at strengthening self-concept can have a positive impact. The study had two hypotheses: one that looked at gender differences in self-concept and life satisfaction, and the other that looked at the link between self-concept and life satisfaction. The study's findings supported both

predictions, with significant gender disparities in self-concept and life satisfaction levels, as well as a significant positive association between self-concept and life satisfaction.

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