



Self-Esteem and Life Satisfaction amongst Afghan and Indian University Students

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Abstract: Students are acclimatized to hold accountability for the future of a country. Their level of self-esteem could be an important and influential factor on their studies and transition to post-study work. However, maintaining high self-esteem might not come with ease and whether it has any compatibility with life satisfaction or not, shall be studied in this research. Thus, these two concepts necessitate for psychologists and educators to study and explore them in order to bring about better study and life conditions for students. In this quest, this study aimed to embark on the assessment and correlation and difference of life satisfaction and self-esteem among Afghan and Indian students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh Universities. The sample was divided into 60 Afghan (30 Male and 30 Female) students and 60 Indian (30 Male 30 Female) students. For the life satisfaction, Satisfaction with Life Scale was used and for the self-esteem, Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale was used. The result of this study indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction among Afghan and Indian students. The results also show that Afghan students are higher on life satisfaction while Indian students are higher on self-esteem. The results further indicate that female Afghan students are higher on life satisfaction and self-esteem as compared to female Indian students nevertheless male Indian students are higher on life satisfaction and self-esteem as compared to male Afghan students.

Key Words: Self-esteem, Life satisfaction, Students

INTRODUCTION

Self - Esteem

Self-esteem refers to a positive or negative orientation toward the self and it reflects a sense of self-regard and self-worth (Rosenberg, 1965). Skodol (1998) defined self-esteem as the 'sense of self-worth, respect, and acceptance which is concomitant to an expectation of attainment in life. When self-assessment is positive, one could feel valuable and develop strong self-esteem. However, when it is negative, a sense of worthless and low self-esteem could be commonly observed. Self-esteem is an important part of personality that shapes from the very early years of life. The researchers of this study believe that depending upon the success or failure and one's reaction to every significant situation in life, self-esteem either grows stronger or gets weaker considerably.

Self-esteem decreases over time during adolescence (Brown et al., 1998; Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). Robins et al (2002) reported that self-esteem is in its highest stage during childhood, drops significantly during adolescence, and increases again in adulthood.

Majority of studies have found that during adolescence, females report lower self-esteem (Cairns et al., 1990; Chubb et al., 1997; Martinez & Dukes, 1991; Quatman & Watson, 2001) and greater depressive mood (Marcotte, Fortin, Potvin, & Papillon, 2002) in comparison to males. Research has also shown that not only do adolescent females report lower self-esteem, but their self-esteem decreases and depressive symptoms increase over time when compared with males (Robins et al., 2002).

Furthermore, research has also shown that gender differences in adolescent self-esteem can be linked to gender differences in the perception of physical appearance. For example, a longitudinal study on students of 3rd through 11th grades indicated that in elementary school, boys and girls viewed their physical appearance equally, however, at the end of high school, girls' views of their physical appearance was significantly lower than those of boys (Harter, 2000). Brown et al (1998) also found that European American boys rated themselves as more attractive and reported liking themselves better relative to European American girls.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction refers to one's assessment of one's satisfaction in many different aspects such as health, finances, family relations, paid employment, friendships, housing, living partner, recreational activity, religion, self-esteem, transportation, and education (Campbell, 1981).

Cribb (2000) claims that life-satisfaction is one of the pointers of 'apparent' quality of life along with other indicators of mental and physical health. It is also referred as an assessment of the overall conditions of existence as derived from a comparison of one's aspiration to one's actual achievement. Bradley & Corwyn, believe that life-satisfaction reflects to the extent where basic needs are met and a variety of goals are attainable (2004). Hereafter, from the researchers' perspective of more goals accomplishment, life-satisfaction also increases. In other words, causality of goal settlement and accomplishment could be substance of life satisfaction and its enhancement.

Beutell (2006) believe that life satisfaction is related to better physical, mental, and longevity health considered to positive nature. It is assumed that the less the incongruity between the individual's desires and achievements is, the more life satisfaction he/she has (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). Buetell (2006) further suggests that life satisfaction is attributable to the family of personality, genetic, and social-cognitive factors such as goal-directed activity, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental support.

Scholars also believe that life satisfaction can lead students to attain various targeted goals throughout their study stages. For instance, O'Neill, 1981 states that strengthening students' life satisfaction has been considered an important factor of getting high quality education for both male and female students. Life satisfaction, in addition to positive and negative affect, is also an essential component of subjective well-being (Diener, 1984; Diener et al., 1985). Increasing the creation of wellness programs in higher education, as noted by Hermon and Hazler (1999), is an evidence of institutional efforts to enhance the quality of life, psychological well-being, and holistic development of students.

A review of literature by several other studies reveals that age (Hong and Giannakopoulos, 1994), stress (Chang, 1998; Makinen and Pychyl, 2001; Simons et al., 2002), physical health (Pilcher, 1998), style of studying (Cheung, 2000), parenting style (Seibel and Johnson, 2001), life style (Bailey and Miller, 1998), and personality constructs (Cha, 2003; Yetim, 2003) are major determinants of life satisfaction among most students. Moreover, cross-national studies suggest that university students in Western-economically affluent societies report higher level of life satisfaction (Dorahy et al., 2000; Schumaker et al., 1993; Simpson et al., 1996).

There was lack of literature on variables of self-esteem and life satisfaction for both Afghan and Indian students studying at universities. Henceforth, this study was designed to measure the variables in terms of correlation and differences of self-esteem and life satisfaction between Afghan and Indian students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities.

Objectives:

1. To assess the correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction among Afghan and Indian students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities.
2. To assess the difference of life satisfaction among Afghan and Indian students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities.
3. To assess the difference of self-esteem among Afghan and Indian students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities.

Hypothesis:

1. There would be a positive/ negative correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction among Afghan and Indian students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities.
2. There would be a significant difference for life satisfaction among Afghan and Indian students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities.
3. There would be a significant difference for self-esteem among Afghan and Indian students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities.
4. There would be a significant difference between gender for self-esteem and life-satisfaction among Afghan and Indian students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

One hundred and twenty students who were full-time students in Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities participated in this study. The sample was divided into 60 Afghan (30 Male and 30 Female) students and 60 Indian (30 Male 30 Female) students. Age range of the sample was within 20-28 years old. Only willing participants were selected for the study.

Measures

Satisfaction with Life Scale

A 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener et al. (1985) is used to measure respondents' life satisfaction. Each item is answered on a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Rosenberg self-esteem Scale

Self-esteem is measured by the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg 1965), which is a 10-item (5 expressed in positive statements and 5 in negative statements) self-report measure of global self-esteem. Each item is answered one of four answer options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

RESULTS

Inter - correlation and t- test analysis were applied to find out the correlation, and difference of self-esteem and life satisfaction among Afghan students studying at Nangarhar university and Indian students studying at Chandigarh university. The statistical results of the Inter – correlation analysis between self-esteem and life satisfaction among Afghan and Indian students are given in Table 1. Furthermore, the statistical results of the difference analysis of self-esteem and life-satisfaction among Afghan and Indian students are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Inter-correlation of Self Esteem and Life Satisfaction among Afghan and Indian Students

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	A	I	MA	MI	FA	FI
	Satisfaction with Life Scale					
	.20**	.49**	.14*	.17**	-0.05	0.06

A=Afghan Students; I=Indian Students; MA= Male Afghan Students; MI=Male India Students; A=Female Afghan Students; FI= Female Indian Students; * $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$

Table 2. Gender Difference for Self-esteem and Life Satisfaction among Afghan and Indian Students.

VARIABLES	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-value
	A		I		
Satisfaction with Life Scale	23.39	3.3	21.87	3.25	2.84**
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	25.44	3.8	30.95	5.62	7.03**
	FA		FI		
Satisfaction with Life Scale	8.97	1.82	8.44	1.34	2.04*
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	6.96	1.44	6.53	1.17	1.99*
	MA		MI		
Satisfaction with Life Scale	9.81	1.68	10.37	1.52	2.13*
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	8.91	1.88	12.48	1.47	12.97**
	MA		FA		
Satisfaction with Life Scale	6.23	1.41	11.21	1.48	2.01*
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	8.02	1.02	12.12	1.49	6.03**
	MI		FI		
Satisfaction with Life Scale	7.02	1.32	9.02	1.41	2.13*
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	10.91	1.71	8.12	1.33	7.12**

A=Afghan Students; I=Indian Students; MA= Male afghan Students; MI=Male Indian Students; FA=Female Afghan Students; FI= Female Indian Students; * $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to assess the correlation and difference of self-esteem and life satisfaction among Afghan students studying at Nangarhar university, Afghanistan and Indian students studying at Chandigarh university, India. The sample was divided into 60 Afghan (30 Male and 30 Female) students and 60 Indian (30 Male 30 Female) students.

The results indicated that among Afghan and Indian students there is a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction ($r = .20$) at $p < 0.01$, ($r = .49$) at $p < 0.01$. The result of the findings is similar with findings of Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976) who also concluded that self-esteem presented the highest correlation with life satisfaction among university students.

Results also indicated a Significant positive correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction among Afghan and Indian Male students ($r = .14$) at $p < 0.05$, ($r = .17$) at $p < 0.01$. Nevertheless, there is no correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction among Afghan and Indian female students ($r = -0.05$), ($r = 0.06$). The finding of the research is in lined with the findings of Reid's (2004) who found out that among (206) American college students, self-esteem predicted men's well-being to a larger extent than predicted to women's well-being.

The findings of the study further indicated that Afghan male and female students are higher on life satisfaction as compare to Indians male and female students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities. Bailey and Miller (1998) findings further support the outcomes where they believed that university students with high life satisfaction and high expectations live with less stress than do other university students who have less life satisfaction.

The finding of the study also presented that Indian male and female students are higher on self-esteem as compare to Afghan male and female students. High self-esteem can be associated with an overall sense of well-being during adolescence, low self-esteem has been related to risk behaviors and negative developmental outcomes. For instance, young people with low self-esteem are at high risk for attempting suicide. Several studies have shown that adolescents with low self-esteem have elevated levels of suicidal ideation and negative expectations of the future (McGee, Williams, & Nada-Raja, 2001; Overholser et al., 1995).

The findings of the statistical analysis also presented that Female Afghan students are higher on life satisfaction and self-esteem as compared to female Indian students. Beutell (2006) believed that life satisfaction is related to better physical, and mental health, longevity, and other outcomes that are considered positive in nature. This idea is further support by Chow (2009) and he believed that high levels of life satisfaction leads to happiness and success. Individuals with higher life satisfaction believe in their decision-making abilities, consider themselves successful and think that their decisions will turn out well (Mann et al., 1998).

The results further presented that male Indian students are higher on life satisfaction and self-esteem as compared to Male Afghan students. The high level of life satisfaction suggest that the individual is in a positive mood while evaluating his life (Vara, 1999; Diener, et al., 1985; Diener, 2000). A high level of self-esteem reflects a positive approach of the individual towards himself (Rosenberg, 1965) and a high level of life satisfaction reflects a general positive evaluation of the individual's life (Vara, 1999; Diener et al., 1985; Diener, 2000). It was found that individuals who have effective and positive social problem solving approach have a high level of self-esteem (D'Zurilla and Nezu, 1999; D'Zurilla et al., 2003; Hamarta, 2009).

The results of the study indicated that female Afghan students are higher on life satisfaction and self-esteem as compared to male Afghan students. A study in China further supports the result of the study where they found out that self-esteem was higher among female than male Chinese students (Chen & Zhang, 2004). Higher levels of life satisfaction were associated with more social support and greater self-esteem (Kong et al. 2012a, b; Kong and You 2013). Individuals who accept themselves in a positive manner and believe that a similar viewpoint is

shared by others will develop a more positive evaluation of their overall life conditions (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Campbell et al., 1976; Harter, 1999; Huebner and Alderman, 1993; Kozma and Stones, 1978; Lackovic-Grgin et al., 1996; Leung and Leung, 1992; Neto, 2001; Wilson and Peterson, 1988).

The results showed that female Indian students are higher on life satisfaction as compared to male Indian students. African American females were found to be as adjusted or better adjusted than European Americans, to generally feel satisfied with themselves, and to have high educational expectations (Gibbs, 1985). Diener et al. (1999) concluded that sex differences are slight but when differences are observed, women usually report higher subjective well-being. Dorahy et al., (1996) also found that life satisfaction was higher among Indian women than Indian men.

The findings presented that male Indian students are higher on self-esteem as compared to female Indian students. Majority of studies have found that females report lower self-esteem (Cairns et al., 1990; Chubb et al., 1997; Martinez & Dukes, 1991; Quatman & Watson, 2001) and greater depressive mood (Marcotte, Fortin, Potvin, & Papillon, 2002) in comparison to males. A meta-analytical study with 216 effect sizes and 97,121 respondents showed that men scored slightly higher on self-esteem than women (Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999). Most included studies were from the United States, Australia, and Canada. Females with low self-esteem are twice as likely to develop depression following a stressful life event than those with average or high self-esteem (Andrews, 1998).

CONCLUSION

As limited research has been conducted to study self-esteem and life satisfaction on Asian university students, hence, this study was conducted to find the correlation and difference of self-esteem and life satisfaction between Afghan and Indian students at Nangarhar and Chandigarh universities. The major findings of this study are: Firstly, this study indicated that there is overall a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction among Afghan and Indian students where ($r = .20$) at $p < .01$, ($r = .49$) at $p < .001$. Researchers of this study believe that both Afghan and Indian students will get success within any higher educational settings in terms of both achieving short- and long-term goals.

Secondly, the findings further presented that Afghan male and female students are higher on life satisfaction compared to Indians male and female students whereas Indian male and female students are higher on self-esteem as compare to Afghan male and female students. Therefore, it can be said that high level of self-esteem and life satisfaction lead to good academic performance and low level of self-esteem and life satisfaction lead to poor academic performance. Furthermore, those who have high level of self-esteem their academic achievement and success will increase in contrast with those who have low level of self-esteem. In addition, students with high level of life satisfaction are at a significant advantage over those with average or low satisfaction levels in terms of academic performance, engagement, academic self-efficacy, approach-oriented achievement goals, and lower academic stress.

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