



Effect of Life Satisfaction on Anxiety, Stress & Depression Among Senior College Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effect of life satisfaction on anxiety, stress, and depression among senior college students. Senior college students often experience increased psychological pressure due to academic workload, career planning, and transitional challenges associated with graduation. The primary objective of the study was to examine whether levels of life satisfaction significantly differentiate anxiety, stress, and depression among college students. The sample comprised 100 senior college students drawn from the Aurangabad District of Maharashtra, selected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. Based on life satisfaction scores, participants were classified into two groups: high life satisfaction ($n = 50$) and low life satisfaction ($n = 50$). Life satisfaction was treated as the independent variable, while anxiety, stress, and depression were considered dependent variables. Data were collected using the Anxiety, Depression, and Stress Scale (ADSS-BSPSA), a standardized and reliable instrument. To analyze group differences, the independent samples t -test was employed. The results revealed statistically significant differences between students with high and low life satisfaction across all three mental health dimensions. Students with high life satisfaction reported significantly lower levels of anxiety, stress, and depression than students with low life satisfaction, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. These findings indicate that life satisfaction plays a crucial protective role in reducing psychological distress among senior college students.

Keywords:- *Life Satisfaction, Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Senior College Students.*

Introduction:

Life satisfaction is a central cognitive component of subjective well-being and reflects an individual's global evaluation of their life circumstances against self-selected standards (Diener et al., 1985). In higher education contexts, life satisfaction is not merely an outcome of academic and social experiences; it also functions as a psychological resource that can shape how students appraise stressors, regulate emotions, and maintain mental health. Among senior



college students, life satisfaction becomes particularly salient because the final year typically involves intensified academic workloads, capstone requirements, internships, career decision-making, financial pressures, and uncertainty about post-graduation transitions. These demands can elevate vulnerability to anxiety, stress, and depression, especially when coping resources are insufficient.

Theoretically, higher life satisfaction may protect students from psychological distress through multiple pathways. First, life satisfaction is associated with more adaptive cognitive appraisals students who feel content with their lives may interpret academic and career stressors as manageable challenges rather than overwhelming threats. Second, higher satisfaction is often linked to stronger perceived social support, optimism, and self-efficacy, all of which buffer stress responses and reduce the likelihood of persistent negative affect. Third, life satisfaction may promote healthier routines (e.g., sleep, exercise, balanced technology use), indirectly lowering physiological and emotional stress. Conversely, low life satisfaction can coincide with pessimism, rumination, and reduced motivation, which may intensify perceived stress and contribute to anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Empirical research in university populations consistently reports an inverse association between life satisfaction and distress indicators. For example, in a study examining undergraduates, life satisfaction was an important predictor of depression, anxiety, and stress, even after considering coping styles and demographic factors (Mahmoud et al., 2012). Similarly, evidence from Turkish university students found significant negative relationships between life satisfaction and both anxiety and depression, reinforcing the view that life satisfaction is closely intertwined with core mental health outcomes in emerging adulthood (Güney, 2010). More recent work has extended these findings by exploring how interpersonal needs and feelings of belongingness influence the relationship between life satisfaction and depression/anxiety/stress among university students (Ooi et al., 2022). Longitudinal evidence also suggests a dynamic relationship between psychological distress and satisfaction with university life across academic years, including senior-year transition periods, indicating that changes in mental health can meaningfully shape students' satisfaction and vice versa.

Within this framework, the present topic—"The Effect of Life Satisfaction on Anxiety, Stress, and Depression Among Senior College Students" is academically and practically significant. If life satisfaction functions as a protective factor, then interventions designed to enhance satisfaction (e.g., strengths-based counseling, goal clarification, social connectedness, and academic support) may simultaneously reduce distress symptoms. If, alternatively, distress



drives life satisfaction downward, mental health services may improve students' overall well-being by directly targeting depression and anxiety symptoms. Either way, examining life satisfaction alongside anxiety, stress, and depression in senior students can inform campus-based prevention strategies during one of the most psychologically demanding phases of college life. Standardized measures such as the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener et al., 1985) and distress tools commonly used in student mental health research can support reliable assessment and evidence-based conclusions.

Review of Literature:-

Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) developed and validated the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) as a brief measure of global life satisfaction. The authors established strong psychometric properties, including internal consistency and temporal stability, and clarified that the SWLS captures a cognitive judgment of one's life rather than transient emotions. This foundational work is central for studies testing how life satisfaction relates to mental health outcomes such as anxiety, stress, and depression, because it provides a standardized tool widely used in university-student research to quantify life satisfaction reliably and compare findings across samples.

Mahmoud, Staten, Hall, and Lennie (2012) examined predictors of depression, anxiety, and stress among undergraduate students and tested the relative role of coping styles and life satisfaction. Their findings indicated that life satisfaction was a meaningful predictor of distress outcomes, suggesting that students who appraise their lives more positively report lower depression, anxiety, and stress. The study supports the conceptualization of life satisfaction as a protective factor in student mental health and highlights its relevance for campus interventions aimed at reducing psychological distress through well-being enhancement and adaptive coping development.

Güney (2010) investigated the interrelations among life satisfaction, anxiety, depression, and hopelessness in a Turkish university student sample. Using established measures (including the SWLS and anxiety/depression inventories), the author reported significant negative associations between life satisfaction and both anxiety and depression. The study's preventive mental health framing emphasizes that promoting well-being indicators such as life satisfaction may reduce risk for psychological symptoms in student populations. This work provides cross-cultural support for the inverse relationship between life satisfaction and internalizing symptoms relevant to senior students under academic and career-transition pressure.



Ooi, Lee, Low, and Hew (2022) assessed associations between depression, anxiety, stress, and satisfaction with life among university students and tested interpersonal needs as moderators. They found that students with lower depression and anxiety tended to report higher satisfaction with life, and that interpersonal constructs (e.g., belongingness-related variables) shaped these relationships. This study adds nuance by indicating that the life satisfaction–distress link may be strengthened or weakened by social and interpersonal context. For senior students, such findings imply that social connectedness and perceived burdensomeness may influence how life satisfaction relates to anxiety, stress, and depression.

Objectives of the study:

1. To find out the impact of life satisfaction on Anxiety, Stress and Depression among College students.

Hypothesis:

- 1) There will be no significant difference between high and low life satisfaction college students' dimensions of Anxiety, Stress and Depression.

Sample:

The sample consisted of 100 senior college students, with 50 reporting high life satisfaction and 50 reporting low life satisfaction, from the Aurangabad District in Maharashtra state. Non-probability purposive sampling was used for this study.

Variables

A) Independent Variables

- 1) Life satisfaction
 - a. High
 - b. Low

B) Dependent Variables

- 1) Anxiety
- 2) Stress
- 3) Depression

Research Tools

1) The Anxiety, Depression, and Stress Scale (ADSS-BSPSA)

The Anxiety, Depression, and Stress Scale (ADSS-BSPSA) was developed by Pallavi Bhatnagar, Megha Singh, Manoj Pandey, Sandhya, and Amitabh from the Department of Psychology at Lucknow University. This scale consists of 48 items divided into three subscales: the Anxiety subscale has 19 items, the Depression subscale has 15 items, and the Stress subscale contains 14 items. Each item is scored as 1 for a "Yes" response and 0 for a "No" response. The overall reliability of the scale was measured using Cronbach's Alpha,

which yielded values of 0.81 and 0.89 for the subscales, indicating good reliability.

Statistical Analysis:

“t” value Statistics was used for the present study.

Statistical Analysis and Discussion

Table No-1 - Mean, Std deviation and t value of Anxiety, Stress and Depression among Senior College students

Factors	Life satisfaction					
	High		Low			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	df	t
Anxiety	7.22	2.13	10.74	2.16	98	8.20**
Stress	7.10	2.84	12.36	3.07	98	8.89**
Depression	6.26	2.50	10.04	2.41	98	7.69**

Significant at 0.01 = 2.62, 0.05* = 1.98**

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine differences in anxiety, stress, and depression between senior college students with high life satisfaction and low life satisfaction. Descriptive statistics and *t* values are presented in Table 1.

The results indicated a statistically significant difference in anxiety levels between students with high life satisfaction ($M = 7.22$, $SD = 2.13$) and those with low life satisfaction ($M = 10.74$, $SD = 2.16$). The obtained *t* value, $t(98) = 8.20$, $p < .01$, exceeded the critical value at the .01 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding suggests that senior college students with higher life satisfaction experience significantly lower anxiety. Higher life satisfaction may enhance adaptive appraisal of academic and career-related stressors, thereby reducing anxiety symptoms (Diener et al., 1985; Mahmoud et al., 2012).

A highly significant difference was also observed in stress levels between the two groups. Students with high life satisfaction reported lower stress ($M = 7.10$, $SD = 2.84$) compared to students with low life satisfaction ($M = 12.36$, $SD = 3.07$). The calculated value, $t(98) = 8.89$, $p < .01$, led to rejection of the null hypothesis. This result supports previous research indicating that life satisfaction functions as a psychological buffer, enabling students to manage academic pressure and future uncertainty more effectively (Ooi et al., 2022).

Depression scores differed significantly between high ($M = 6.26$, $SD = 2.50$) and low life satisfaction groups ($M = 10.04$, $SD = 2.41$), with $t(98) = 7.69$, $p < .01$. The null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that students with lower life satisfaction exhibit significantly higher depressive symptoms. This finding aligns with earlier studies demonstrating an inverse relationship between life satisfaction and depression among university students (Güney, 2010).



The findings demonstrate that life satisfaction has a significant effect on anxiety, stress, and depression among senior college students. Higher life satisfaction is associated with better mental health outcomes, underscoring its importance as a protective factor during the final and most demanding phase of college education.

Conclusions:-

- 1) Senior college students with high life satisfaction showed significantly lower anxiety compared to those with low life satisfaction.
- 2) Senior college students with high life satisfaction experienced significantly lower stress than students with low life satisfaction.
- 3) Senior college students with high life satisfaction reported significantly lower depression than their low life satisfaction counterparts.

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