



**Relationship between Life Satisfaction, Psychological Well-Being, Happiness: A
Comparative Analysis between Married and Unmarried Individuals**

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Abstract

The current study highlights the relationship between Life Satisfaction, Psychological Well-Being, and Happiness. The research further explored marital status differences among the three attributes. Two Hundred participants took part in the study (Married individuals = 100, unmarried individuals = 100) aged between 26-40 years. The results revealed a significantly moderate positive relationship between Life Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being, a significantly strong positive relationship between Psychological Well-Being and Happiness and a significantly moderate positive relationship between Life Satisfaction and Happiness. The differences between married and unmarried individuals were significant in Life

Satisfaction and Happiness with married individuals scoring more on both the dimensions whereas no significant difference was found in Psychological Well-Being.

Keywords: Life Satisfaction, Psychological Well-Being, Happiness, Married, Unmarried

Introduction

Studying Positive Psychology has become an important area of interest for psychological studies (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5). An increasing number of psychologists have started focusing their research on the positive side of affective spectrum, in a striking contrast to psychology's longstanding focus on negative emotions like anxiety and despair (Myers, 1992). Studies in this field of experience of subjective well-being or happiness are growing prominently in this increasing body of research.

Subjective Well-Being

A vast majority of individuals views subjective well-being to be complicated, including both cognitive and affective components (Deiner, et al., 1999). Two broad components of subjective well-being have been identified by research; an affective component, which is further, divided classified into pleasant and unpleasant affect and cognitive component referred to as life satisfaction (Diener, 1990; Diener & Emmons, 1984).

Life Satisfaction

According to Shin and Johnson (1978), life satisfaction is an evaluative process where individuals assess the quality of one's life in accordance with certain set of standards. Life satisfaction is defined as "a person's cognitive and affective evaluation of his or her life"

(Diener et al., 2002). According to Veenhoven (1996), life satisfaction is the “extent to which one’s overall quality of life has improved”. The components that impact life satisfaction consists of the events that happened throughout one’s life, including experiences (like pleasure, love, a place in the society, etc.) and changes in one’s personal situations. It also highlights the connection between the inner expression of emotions, the capability to enjoy oneself, satisfaction of life, and the inner growth procedure (involving inferring and calculating, the purpose behind basis of emotions, and differences in how the living space and the whole is developed).

In accordance to the criteria that individuals set for themselves, life satisfaction is a constructive assessment of their own complete existence. Research on life satisfaction have shown that psychological factors, like intimate relationships, culture and personal preferences, have a more significant impact on determining life satisfaction than race, gender, money and status (Chechen, 2008).

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is a condition that coexists simultaneously with the absence of debilitating aspects of human conditions such as fear, anger, anxiety, depression, and the presence of supportive aspects such as meaningful connections, healthy relationships, positive emotions, engagement, environmental mastery, and self-actualisation. Psychological well-being takes into account a broad range of constructs than just happiness and goes above and beyond just mere absence of psychological ill-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2011).

As defined by Diener et al. (2010), psychological well-being is a “subjective evaluation of an individual’s life oneself which can be divided into three aspects positive emotions, engagement and meaning”. This concept of psychological well-being comprises a broad range

of pleasant experiences such as satisfaction, happiness and a sense of accomplishment. According to Ryff (1989) psychological well-being has six components: autonomy, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal growth, pleasant relationships, and purpose in life. These attributes encompasses a person's feeling of self-determination, control over his or her surrounding, ability to form and maintain positive relationships, potential for personal development and a sense of purpose in life.

Happiness

The definition of happiness and its meaning and understanding differs based on who is being asked; a researcher, an academician, a philosopher, a housewife or a politician. According to Aristotle, "Eudemonia" or happiness is the purest and highest level of human joy obtained through fulfilment and well-being. According to him, one's virtue is depicted by the action of happiness (Kenny,2014). Through the findings of Gavin and Mason (2004), a person reaches happiness when all of their longstanding wishes are fulfilled. Happiness can be experienced in various ways, and it varies from time to time. Along with the various definitions of happiness, many theories of happiness has also been proposed.

The psychological Theory of Hedonism emphasises the desire for pleasure. Another approach called the Theory of Desire, explains that our desire to have something can either a reason for our satisfaction or frustration. It is normal for many individuals to experience this kind of behaviour . The objective list theories of well-being also known as The Objective Theory, offers a list of things and pursuits that are considered beneficial for a person. It consists of rational activity, being a good parent, moral goodness or development of an individual's abilities.in accordance with the objective theory life is good for those who re living it (Varellius, 2013). Aside from this, a theory that embraces all the three conventional ideas aforementioned is the Authentic Happiness Theory. It comprises of all the three previously

stated theories. The theory is viewed as “Full Life” where Pleasant Life relates to Hedonism, “Good Life” the Desire and “Meaningful Life” as the Objective List (Seligman & Royzman, 2003).

Most of the research in positive psychology has been in western context, and the amalgamation of all the three factors studied in this research; life satisfaction, psychological well-being and happiness is not observed together in most of the existing literature. Marriage is an important social institution in India and its connection to factors that relates with positive psychology have not been predominantly been researched in Indian context. Marriage is an important aspect of person’s social being, thus marital status can have a crucial impact on an individual’s well-being. Studying differences between married and unmarried individuals can throw light on impact of marital status on well-being, satisfaction and happiness of a person.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To study the relationship between life satisfaction, psychological well-being and happiness and compare them between married and unmarried individuals.

Research Objectives

- To study the relationship between life satisfaction and psychological well-being among adults
- To study the relationship between psychological well-being and happiness among adults.
- To study the relationship between life satisfaction and happiness among adults.

- To study the difference in life satisfaction between married and unmarried adults.
- To study the difference in psychological well-being between married and unmarried adults.
- To study the difference in happiness between married and unmarried adults.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant relationship between life satisfaction and psychological well-being.
- There will be a significant relationship between psychological well-being and happiness.
- There will be a significant relationship between life satisfaction and happiness.
- There will be a significant difference in life satisfaction between married and unmarried adults.
- There will be a significant difference in psychological well-being between married and unmarried adults.
- There will be a significant difference in happiness between married and unmarried adults.

Sample

The total number of sample is 200 (N=200). Of the total sample, 100 were females and 100 males. The sample was collected from individuals aged between 26-40 years. Purposive and snowball sampling was used to collect the data.

Inclusion Criteria

- Individuals aged between 26-40 years only.

- Individuals who reside in Delhi and NCR region only.
- Can understand English.

Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals below 26 years of age and above 40 years.
- Individuals unwilling to participate in the study.
- Individuals who are not fluent with English language.

Description of the Test

Life Satisfaction Scale: Dr. Haredo Ojha (2005) developed life Satisfaction Scale. It is a self-report measure which consist of 20 items, out of which 12 items are in positive direction suggesting satisfaction with life and 8 items were in negative direction suggesting dissatisfaction with life. The scale is a five-point Likert type where respondents must choose from 5 alternatives: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The scale is applicable for individuals from all age groups. The test-retest reliability of this measure is 0.73 and split half reliability is 0.83, indicating that it is a highly reliable test. The scale also has a high construct validity.

Psychological Well-Being was measured using Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (18-items) it was developed by Carol Ryff in 1989. In this study, we used the short version of this scale, which consists of 18 items. The scale is sub-divided into six domains viz self-acceptance, autonomy, positive relationships with others, environmental mastery, personal growth, and purpose in life. It is based on a seven-point Likert scale with respondents choosing from the following options; strongly agree, somewhat agree, a little agree, neither agree nor disagree, a little disagree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree with scores from 6 to 1 respectively. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for reliability was 0.89. The internal consistency

coefficient was satisfactory ranging between 0.86-0.93. The test-retest reliability was done over six weeks was also high (ranging between 0.81-0.88).

Happiness: To measure happiness, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was used. Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University developed it in 2002. The questionnaire consists of 29 items and is a self-report measure. It is a six-point Likert type scale. The respondents are to choose from options; strongly disagree, moderately disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, moderately agree, and strongly agree scored from 1-6 respectively. The Cronbach Alpha for test retest is 0.84 and 0.87 at both stages. Content validity was approximated by renowned psychologists who approved validity of this questionnaire to measure happiness.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through Offline, face to face mode. Each participant was thanked for their cooperation. Standardizes psychological tests were administered to the participants.

Statistical Analysis

The data obtained was analyzed quantitatively using SPSS 21.0. The statistical measures used to obtain the results included: descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and Independent Sample t-test.

Results**Table 1***Descriptive statistics; mean, standard deviation, variance, skewness and kurtosis*

Variable	Mean	SD	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Life Satisfaction	66.59	10.44	109.11	-.37	-.05
Psychological Well-Being	90.96	12.15	147.75	-.08	-.67
Happiness	4.25	.710	.505	-.32	.09

Table 2*Correlation between life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and happiness.*

Variable	Life satisfaction	Psychological well-being	Happiness
Life Satisfaction	1	0.648*	0.671*
Psychological well-being	0.648*	1	0.770*
Happiness	0.671*	0.770*	1

*Note: **correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Table 3

Differences in life satisfaction among married and unmarried adults.

Variable	Married		Unmarried		t – test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Life satisfaction	68.59	8.72	64.60	11.62	0.007*
Psychological well-being	92.04	10.89	89.89	13.26	0.212
Happiness	4.35	0.64	4.14	0.76	0.036*

Note: $p < 0.05$. * Significant difference between groups.

Discussion

The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between life satisfaction, psychological well-being and happiness and to compare the differences between married and unmarried adults. To measure Life satisfaction, Life Satisfaction Scale by Dr. Haredo Ojha (2005) was used, to measure Psychological well-being Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (18 items) (1989) was made use of and to gather data for Happiness, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire by Michael Argyle and Peter Hills (2002) was utilised. Data was collected from the sample over a period of 30 days, and once data collection was complete, scoring was done.

The first hypothesis stated a significant relationship between life satisfaction and psychological well-being. The results revealed a significant moderate positive relationship between life satisfaction and psychological well-being. These results are in line with a study conducted by Sharbafshaaer (2019) where the results showed that dimensions of psychological

well-being (autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relationships and self-acceptance) had a significant and positive correlation with life satisfaction. Thus, we accept the hypothesis.

The hypothesis stated that there would be a significant relationship between psychological well-being and happiness among adults. The results indicate a significant and strong positive correlation between psychological well-being and happiness meaning an increase in psychological well-being will lead to an increase in happiness. Hemarajarajeswari and Gupta (2021) in their study found similar results which showed that there is a significant and a strong positive correlation between psychological well-being and happiness ($r = 0.78$). Thus, we retain the hypothesis.

The next hypothesis assumed a significant relationship between life satisfaction and happiness. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between life satisfaction and happiness. Badri et al., (2022) in their research had corresponding findings, indicating significant and positive relationship between life satisfaction, happiness and well-being. Common predictive factors including quality time spent with family, work life balance, fulfilling interpersonal relationships, social support, enhanced self-evaluation of health, etc. contribute to the relationship between life satisfaction and happiness. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

The next hypothesis stated a significant difference in life satisfaction of married and unmarried individuals. The results show that is significant difference in life satisfaction between married and unmarried individuals with married individual being more satisfied with their life than unmarried individuals are. Ghosh (2016) in their study found that married women had greater life satisfaction than unmarried women. Several factors could contribute to married individuals being more satisfied with their life like, marital satisfaction, emotional and mental

support from the spouse, stability in life, cultural norms of the region which consider marriage to be an important institution. Thus, the hypothesis is retained.

The fifth hypothesis formulated for the same was that there will be a significant difference in the psychological well-being of both the groups. The results indicate no significant difference in the psychological well-being of married and unmarried individuals. In the mental health dimension, which assessed psychological distress and psychological well-being among married and unmarried research scholars, no significant difference was found between the two groups (Maurya & Gill, 2012). Thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

The sixth hypothesis stated a significant difference in happiness between married and unmarried adults. The results reveal a difference in happiness among married and unmarried adults, with married adults being happier than unmarried adults. Vyas and Prajapati (2021) in their study found a significant difference in happiness between married and unmarried people, where married people scored more than unmarried people did. The factor contributing to this difference may be age difference between married and unmarried people, as it is assumed that unmarried people are younger and do not have enough understanding about life and relationships (Vyas & Prajapati, 2021). Thus, the hypothesis is retained.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and happiness and to compare the differences between married and unmarried adults. The correlation result shows a positive moderate relationship between life satisfaction and psychological well-being ($r = 0.648$, $p < 0.05$), positive strong relationship between psychological well-being and happiness ($r = 0.770$, $p < 0.05$) and a positive moderate

relationship between life satisfaction and happiness ($r = 0.672$, $p < 0.05$). The independent sample T – test results reveal that there is a significant difference (0.007 , $p < 0.05$) in life satisfaction between married and unmarried individuals. There are no significant differences (0.212 , $p < 0.05$) in psychological well-being of married and unmarried individuals. There is a significant difference (0.036 , $p < 0.05$) in happiness among married and unmarried individuals. Thus, it can be seen marital status as a factor does affect positive attributes like life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and happiness.

Limitations

A few limitations of this study are; the sample size is not large enough to generalise the results. The sample has been taken only from Delhi and NCR region, thus does not take into account the regional and cultural differences. Self-report questionnaire used in the study might provide biased and socially acceptable results, leading to discrepancy in data. For married individuals the duration of marriage was not considered as a mediating factor, which might have led to difference in results.

Future Implications

Further studies can be carried out using a large sample and over a longer period to understand the full potential of the variables. Along with quantitative data, qualitative data can also be gathered to get a deeper and better understanding of the variables. Various other factors like duration of marriage, cultural and regional differences can be considered to get more accurate and generalizable result.

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