Original Article

Relationship of Academic Performance and Well-Being in University Students

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Abstract

Objectives: The aim of the present study was to determine the association between academic performance and well-being (depression, subjective happiness and life satisfaction) among university students.

Study design and settings: A cross sectional study conducted at various universities of Karachi in 2014.

Subjects and Methods: Sample of present study, consisting of 300 university students, 150 males and 150 females with the age range of 19-30 years (Mean age = 21.48 and Std. Deviation $\pm$ 2.298), their education level was graduation to masters and they were selected from different universities of Karachi. Center for Epidemiological Studies Scale for Depression, Subjective Happiness Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale were administered on each participant. Academic Performance was obtained through cumulative grade point (CGPA) average scores of last exams.

Results: Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation was computed to find out the relationship among variables. Results revealed that academic performance is significantly negatively correlated with depression (r = -.230, n=300, $p <$ .000), and significantly positively correlated with subjective happiness (r = .139, n=300, $p <$ .016) and life satisfaction (r = .149, n=300, $p <$ .010).

Conclusion: It is concluded that academic performance is significantly negatively related to depression and significantly positively related to subjective happiness and life satisfaction.

Key words: Academic performance, well-being depress, satisfaction, university.

Introduction

The pursuit of well-being is fundamental to human existence. Therefore, research on well-being are the famous topic of psychological researches. Personal characteristics and contextual factors which determine well-being in university age students are vital in that line of research. University students are considered to be the future leaders. Academic performance is considered as their essential life achievement and major objective of life. During their academic life, students have to fulfill various responsibilities and challenges. This might be the main reason and basic source of their stressfulness, anxiousness and depressiveness. In number of cases, students can cope with the academic challenges which they faced during their academic life; but there are also numbers of students who are unable to cope with academic difficulties. This may greatly impact in their well-being. In order to gain life goals and academic success, it is essential to be in a mentally and physically healthy state. Stressful circumstances can produce psychological distress and reduction in academic performance.[1] It was found that, the self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and well-being are imperative factors for improving learning, academic performance and excellence of education.[2]

Academic performance is generally assessed in exams but there is no common accord on how it is tested in a best way. Academic performance refers as how the students pact with their studies and how they deal with or complete multiple tasks which set for them by their teachers. Academic performance refers as a level at which a pupil has gain their instructive goals.[3]

In present research, well-being has been assessed with level of depression, subjective happiness and satisfaction with life. Depression is a destructive affective state (sadness, anxiousness, gloominess), behaviors (anger, restless, hopelessness, and helplessness) and lack of activities.[4] However, subjective happiness refers to existence of positive sentiments and nonexistence of negative sentiments; life satisfaction refers to individuals' degree of global satisfaction with life. Happiness is an affective aspect and satisfaction with

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Authors Contribution

SRB has done the conceptualization of project, data collection, literature search, statistical analysis, drafting, revision and writing of the manuscript. SJK did the supervision and revision.

life is a cognitive aspect of subjective well-being.[5] Thus happy students are greatly satisfied with their life and they experience positive emotions in great intensity than negative emotions.[6]

Roeser et al[7] found that students with continuous feeling of internal distress (sadness, apprehension and depressiveness) show reduction in academic functioning, whereas students with external distress (aggression, frustration and phobias) exhibit academic difficulties such as delay in learning and poor academic success. According to Asarnow, et al.[8] depressed students have tendency of diminishing academic and educational achievement. Several researches depicted that academic performance is negatively correlated with depression.[9-11]

Happiness refers to a psychological state, following a sense of gratification regarding vital human desires and requirement.[6] Life satisfaction (a cognitive aspect which assessed overall satisfaction with life) and happiness (an affective aspect which is further divided into conditions availability of positive emotions and unavailability of negative emotions) are the indicator of subjective well-being. There is positive relationship between subjective well-being and academic performance.[12,13] Further, Huebner, Gilman, and Laughlin[14] found significant correlation between academic performance and life satisfaction. A longitudinal Chinese research study reflected that self-perceived academic performance in main subjects (Chinese, English, and mathematics) is significantly related to their current life satisfaction and expected overall life satisfaction 7 months to 9 months later.[15]

Given that well-being has important contribution in the enhancement or at least adequate level of academic performance in the university students. Due to depression, students experienced mood issues and they have lack of interest in studies, consequently they are unable to perform well academically. But with higher level of happiness and life satisfaction, they can perform well academically. Hence, this research is purposed to assess the relationship between academic performance and well-being (depression, subjective happiness and life satisfaction) in University students. For this purpose, the objectives of the study was to investigate the relationship of academic performance and well-being (depression, subjective happiness and life satisfaction) among university students

Subjects and Methods

The study has been conducted considering all the ethical considerations. Researcher has taken permission from university authorities for data collection from various universities of Karachi. Purpose and procedure of research were explained to them. Written informed consent were taken from every participant, although it was volunteer participation. The participants were at minimal risk. They were assured about the confidentiality concerns that their provided information will remained confidential. After administration of demographic form and research scale, all participants were acknowledged and appreciated.

A total of 300 university students were enrolled, among them 150 were male and 150 were female that were gathered with the help of convenient sampling technique from various universities of Karachi. The age range of selected participants was ranging from 19 to 30 years, the mean age 21.48 ± 2.29. Participants were belonging to various socioeconomic classes. Socioeconomic status (SES) of participants was determined on the basis of household income. According to Federal Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan, 2001, Middle SES (Family having per month income 14000 to 30000 rupees), Upper Middle SES (Family having per month income 30000 to 50000 rupees) and Upper SES Family having per month income 50000 rupees and more.

Demographic information form contains information related to participants name age, gender, family structure and socioeconomic status.

Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) was developed by Radloff in 1977. This scale comprises 20 items including six sub-scales revealing main aspects of depression: low mood, having guilt and worthlessness feeling, helplessness and hopelessness, psychomotor retardation, low appetite, and sleep issues. This scale can be self or interviewer-administered. The CES-D is an excellent scale to measure quantity, category, and length of depressive symptoms across ethnic, sex, and age categories.[16-18] CES-D scale has good enough internal consistency that was reported with Cronbach's alpha coefficients is ranged from 0.85 to 0.90 across research studies.[16]

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) was developed by Lyubomirsky, & Lepper in 1999.[19] This scale contained items. Two items ask participants to describe themselves using both absolute ratings and ratings relative to peers, while the remaining two items give brief explanations of happiness and unhappiness of individuals and ask participants the degree at which every characterization explains them. SHS has been validated in several researches with huge number of participants. Results revealed higher internal consistency along with excellent test re-test reliability; alpha is ranged from 0.79 to 0.94. This scale also has good convergent and discriminant validity.[19]

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin in 1985[20]. This scale contains 5 items which measure the level of life satisfaction of participants. Individuals have to respond at five point likert scale. SWLS has brief administration few minutes are required to complete and can be completed by interview through phone call or

paper and pencil response. SWLS Internal consistency is ranged from 0.57 to 0.75 (α = 0.87).[20] This scale also has well to excellent validity.

Present study was conducted in the different universities of Karachi. First of all, permission from Dean of universities were taken. After getting their permission, all the participants were approached in their universities. Initially researcher developed rapport with chosen participants (university students), then the objective and procedure of the study was explained to them. Participants were requested to sign the consent form encompassing information regarding the purpose of the present research, containing the terms of confidentiality that they have right to discontinue from study at any time whenever they want. Afterward, it has been ask to them to complete the demographic form followed by Center for Epidemiological Studies Scale for Depression Subjective Happiness Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale. At the end, voluntary cooperation of institutions and participants was acknowledged and appreciated.

For investigation of relationship between academic performance and well-being among university students, Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation were calculated with the help of (SPSS, V-18.0).

Results

Table-1 shows demographic characteristics of sample, equal gender distribution 50% male and 50% female, 32% belong to joint family structure and 68% belong to nuclear family structure. In term of socioeconomic status, 34% belong to middle, 40% belong to upper middle and 25% belong to upper socioeconomic status.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of sample. (n=300)

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	150	50.0
	Female	150	50.0
Family status	Joint	098	32.0
	Nuclear	215	68.0
Socioeconomic	Middle	104	34.0
Status	Upper Middle	129	40.7
	Upper	080	25.3
Age	Mean	21.48	
	Std. Deviation	2.298	

Table 2: Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation of academic performance and well-being.

Variables	N	r	Sig.
Depression	300	-.230	.000
Subjective Happiness	300	.139	.016
Life Satisfaction	300	.149	.010

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Academic performance was negatively correlated to depression (r = -.230, n=300, $p < .000$) whereas significantly positively correlated to Subjective happiness (r = .139, n = 300, $p < .016$) and Life satisfaction (r = .149, n=300, $p < .010$) (Table-2).

Discussion

This study showed that depression is significantly negative related to academic performance, however subjective happiness and life satisfaction significantly positively related to academic performance and these finding are in line with previous research findings.[7,21,22]

Students' academic performance can be affected by various factors such as health, individual characteristics, family, social interaction etc. In present research, we investigated the relationship of academic performance and well-being in university students.

Academic performance is negatively related to depression. Present research finding are in line with previous research finding which reflected that depressive students are vulnerable to reduction in academic performance. It was argued that depressed students are inclined to focus their attention on immaterial negative thoughts and lower level of sustain attention for completion of cognitive tasks which inhibit their academic performance. As several university education activities such as homework, class work, study project, class presentation depend on the capability to sustain attention and good concentration level, depression disturbed attention and concentration among university students which likely to inhibit the academic achievement. According to Chen and Li.[23] depressed mood has significant negative relationship with academic performance. Further, depressive student due to depressive symptoms (i.e. sadness, restlessness, hopelessness and helplessness) are unable to fulfill academic tasks requirements and failed to fulfill their set goals. Depressive students' negative view toward self, other and life majorly inhibited their academic attainments. Hence, negative relationship between academic performance and depression is expected.

On the other hand, academic performance positively correlated to happiness and life satisfaction. Happiness and life satisfaction are the sentimental and cognitive aspects of subjective well-being.[8] Happy students are satisfied with their life and they frequently experience elevated level of positive emotions than negative emotions. Their positive emotional state keeps them going and their satisfaction with life also directed them to achieve life goals. Higher level of academic performance makes students happier and satisfied with their life. Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener [24] claimed that happiness and academic performance reciprocally strengthening. Student with higher level of happiness can

achieve good academic grades . Cheng and Furnham also found a positive correlation between academic performance and happiness in United Kingdom adolescents.[25]

Gilman & Huebner [26] found that life satisfaction (subjective well-being) is positively related to academic performance. Life satisfaction is linked with academic performance, such as when students are completely satisfied with their life they have best academic functioning such as more perceived social support, good interpersonal relationships and higher academic performance. Huebner, Gilman, and Laughlin [14] and Leung, McBride-Chang, and Lai [15] also found positive association between academic performance and life satisfaction.

Hence, it can be said that academic positive related to well-being [27] happiness, life satisfaction and negatively related to depression.[28]

It is concluded that academic performance is significantly negatively related to depression and significantly positively related to subjective happiness and life satisfaction. It is anticipated that the present research might form the basis for the development of strategic plans to deal with the student issues, such as depression, anxiety etc. with the help of counseling services. Number of student counselor might appoint in universities and other educational institutions to overcome students issues, emotional problems. So that student can cope with their academic pressures and their well-being did not diminish and their academic performance remains adequate.

Conflict of interest: None declared.

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