

## **A Probe into Life Satisfaction of the School-Going Adolescents**

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**Abstract :** Present study was carried out through descriptive survey method within ex-post-facto research design. To collect the data “Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)” were administered on a random sample of 51 male and 64 female school-going adolescents. In Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) there are 40 items and with each item a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 to 5 is attached. Total scores can range at the lowest from  $(1 \times 40) = 40$  to at the highest  $(5 \times 40) = 200$  and the ambivalent (midpoint) is  $(3 \times 40) = 120$ . The result shows that the mean and standard deviation of MSLSS scores were 158.93 and 19.435 respectively. Here the mean (158.93) was much higher than the ambivalent score (120). Again according to the manual of the test higher scores reflect a greater sense of life satisfaction. It might be concluded that on an average the school going adolescents were highly satisfied in their life.

**Keywords:** Positive Psychology, Life satisfaction, MSLSS, Self-satisfaction, Therapeutic technique

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the context of positive psychology, many researchers have underlined the pattern of life satisfaction, which deals with the elements that may characterize as a ‘good life’ and is concerned with how individuals’ lives can be improved (Bullinlger, 2009) [1]. The search for purpose in life and how this construct contributes to optimal human development is a topic of increasing interest to positive psychology scholars, and the results of this study shall reveal under what circumstances purpose and hope act as indicators of and contributors to human thriving. Further, the findings shall shed light on the nature of this more externally-oriented conception of purpose, a construct which has garnered increasing attention from positive youth development researchers (Benson, 2006; Damon, 2009). [2,3]

Life satisfaction is defined as the approach of an individual to assess his or her previous or current conditions of life (Myers & Diener, 1995; Huebner et al., 2005)[4,5]. Life satisfaction judgments indicate to either global statements or refer to a person’s satisfaction with important domains of life, such as friends, family, or self (Suldo et al., 2006). [6] Diener (1994) [7] described life satisfaction as an individual’s cognitive evaluation on their quality of life towards the overall or specific domains. The specific domains contain interpersonal relationship with family, friendship, school experiences, observation of self as well as in a living environment (Huebner, 1994).[8]

According to Lewis (2010)[9], life satisfaction can be measured by two types of dimension, which are unidimensional (global) and multidimensional (domain specifics). Multidimensional life satisfaction measure provides a better view point of adolescents’ life satisfaction judgments than unidimensional measurement (Huebner, Laughlin, Ash & Gilman,1998).[10] Based on the multidimensional perspective, (Huebner,1994) [8]proposed five specific domains of life satisfaction which are family, school, self, friends and living environment assessed early adolescents’ life satisfaction (Oberle, Schonert-Reich & Zumbo, 2011)[11]. With respect to youth, adolescents’ global life satisfaction reports are strongly associated with assessments of satisfaction with family, friends, school, living environment, and self (Seligson et al., 2003).[12]

#### **1.1 Purpose of the Study**

The studies probing into the determinants of life satisfaction have earlier concentrated on adulthood (Diener et al., 1999) [13]. In recent times there has been an increase in studies concentrating on children and adolescents (Huebner, 2004; Gilman and Huebner, 2006; Proctor et al., 2010) [14,15,16]. Adolescence is a period reflected by emotional turmoil (Gilman and Huebner, 2003). [17] Adolescents have acquaintance with

both the opportunities and risks (Chow, 2005). [18] Adolescents are at risk of evolving psychological ill-being. Furthermore, they face a great number of encounters and stressors that are associated with school environment.

The purpose of this study was to clarify the way the life satisfaction construct functions in the lives of adolescents. It is believed that the findings would make important scholarly as well as practical contributions to the growing field of positive youth development.

## **1.2 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the present study was to get the statistical description of life satisfaction of the school going adolescents; and to observe the gender inequality, if any, in life satisfaction.

## **II. RELATED WORK**

During the century, technological breakthroughs is reaching its zenith, higher than any period in human history, and this development will, in turn, bring about dramatic changes in various aspects of human life. New methods of dealing with existing and emerging issues, adopting to new changes, ways of communicating with others, coping with environmental pressures will, more than ever, be on the agenda during this century. Living under such circumstances demands certain sets of skill to enable us live a healthy, zealous, peaceful, prosperous and efficient life. This demand is mostly because, many individuals fail to efficiently address the hardships of daily life and cope successfully with challenges that every human being might face during a life time. Numerous bodies of research have indicated that many health issues and psycho-emotional disorders are indeed rooted in psycho-social problems. During a lifetime, everyone is challenged and has to cope with difficulties and hassles of life and every individual has their own way of dealing with these issues. Those who successfully get past these challenges are in possession of three skills; Flexibility, Prudence, and Logical Thinking. As a matter of fact, experts hold that it is required that mental health initiatives, including life skills training, be employed in order for the students to be able to assert more control over their lives and maintain their mental health.

Diener, Diener and Diener (1995)[19] have analysed the factors predicting variations in the subjective well-being of adults from dozens of nations. The researchers have concluded that living in a more individualistic (vs. collectivistic) nation was the single most powerful positive predictor of citizens' happiness and satisfaction. Since this ground-breaking study, research with college students (Kim, Kasser, & Lee, 2003)[20] and adolescents (Gilman et al., 2008; Park & Huebner, 2005)[21,22] has similarly found well-being benefits of living in a traditionally individualistic versus collectivistic country. Despite these consistent findings, research has yet to clearly explicate the processes through which broad national dimensions such as individualism and collectivism influence the well-being of adolescents.

One of the broad differences between individualistic and collectivistic nations pointed out by researchers studying well-being differences (Diener et al., 1995; Gilman et al., 2008)[19,21] is that values and norms within traditionally individualistic nations typically emphasize greater freedom and independence to pursue goals related to personal satisfaction and interests, whereas the values and norms in collectivist nations endorse restrictions on individuals' expression of their own desires and interests. Based on the exposure to such values and norms, the interactions between authority figures and adolescents in more collectivistic nations may be characterized by fewer opportunities for adolescents to experience a sense of self-determination and autonomy than occurs in the interactions of adolescents in individualistic nations. These differences may then explain cross-national variations in adolescents' well-being.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

The present study was carried out through descriptive survey method.

### **1.3 Sampling**

In the present study multiphasic stratified random sampling technique was adopted.

#### **1.3.1 Source**

Government / Government aided Secondary / Higher Secondary Schools West Bengal, India, were the source of sample.

#### **1.3.2 Sample Characteristics**

- a) Only school going adolescents (students of Class IX & X of age group 14 – 17 yrs.) were taken.
- b) Only Bengali speaking students were taken.
- c)

#### **1.3.3 Sample Size**

Finally 51 male subjects and 64 female subjects were participated in the study.

### **1.4 Research Tool**

The 'Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)' (Huebner, 2001) [23] was used in the present study for data collection. The tool was selected by applying yardsticks of relevance, appropriateness, reliability, validity and suitability. Brief descriptions of the tools are given herewith.

**1.4.1 Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) (Huebner, 2001)**

According to Huebner (2001) [23] the increased interest in the promotion of positive psychological well-being in children and adolescents was the impetus for the construction of the ‘Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)’ (Compass, 1993; Sarason, 1997). [24,25] The 40 item MSLSS is designed to provide a multidimensional profile of children’s as well as adolescents’ life satisfaction judgments. Such differentiated assessments are expected to enable more focused diagnostic, prevention, and intervention efforts. Specifically, the MSLSS is designed to – (a) create a profile of children’s as well as adolescents’ satisfaction with important, specific domains (e.g., school, family, friends) in their lives; (b) assess their general overall life satisfaction; (c) demonstrate acceptable psychometric properties (e.g., acceptable subscale reliability); (d) discover a replicable factor structure indicating the meaningfulness of the five dimensions; and (e) be used effectively with children across a wide range of age and ability levels. Scoring is straightforward. A 5-point Likert scale format has been used with middle and high school students (Huebner et al., 1998)[10]. In this case, response options are assigned points. Here 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, etc. Higher score reflects higher life satisfaction.

**1.5 Procedure**

The relevant data on different constructs were collected by administering the MSLSS on the subjects under study in accordance with the directions provided in the respective manuals of the tools.

**IV. RESULT**

The results are presented in tabular form. In the tables at first the descriptive as well as inferential statistics are presented hereunder.

**Table-1:** Descriptive Statistics of MSLSS Scores of the School Going Adolescents (Female & Male) as a Whole

<b>MSLSS Score</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Family	115	32	08	40	30.26	5.585
Friends	115	23	20	43	30.69	4.631
School	115	27	13	40	34.20	4.974
Living Environment	115	21	19	40	34.10	4.744
Self	115	23	12	35	29.68	3.194
<b>MSLSS</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>158.93</b>	<b>19.435</b>

Table-1 exhibits the descriptive statistics of scores on different facets and as a total of ‘Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)’ of the school going adolescents considering both genders (male and female) as a whole. In case of the facet related to satisfaction on family life the “minimum” of the scores was 8 and the “maximum” of those was 40 and the range was 32; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 30.26 and 5.585 respectively. Next, in case of the facet related to satisfaction of having friends the “minimum” of the scores was 20 and the “maximum” of those was 43 and the range was 23; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 30.69 and 4.631 respectively. Then, in case of the facet related to satisfaction of having the school the “minimum” of the scores was 13 and the “maximum” of those was 40 and the range was 27; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 34.20 and 4.974 respectively. Then in case of the facet related to satisfaction derived from living environment the “minimum” of the scores was 19 and the “maximum” of those was 40 and the range was 21; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 34.10 and 4.744 respectively. Next, in case of the facet related to satisfaction derived from self the “minimum” of the scores was 12 and the “maximum” of those was 35 and the range was 23; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 29.68 and 3.194 respectively. Finally, in case of MSLSS scores in a totality the “minimum” of the scores was 83 and the “maximum” of those was 200 and the range was 117; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 158.93 and 19.435 respectively. From the figure-4.1 it is observed that the distribution of MSLSS scores was near to Normal Probability Curve.

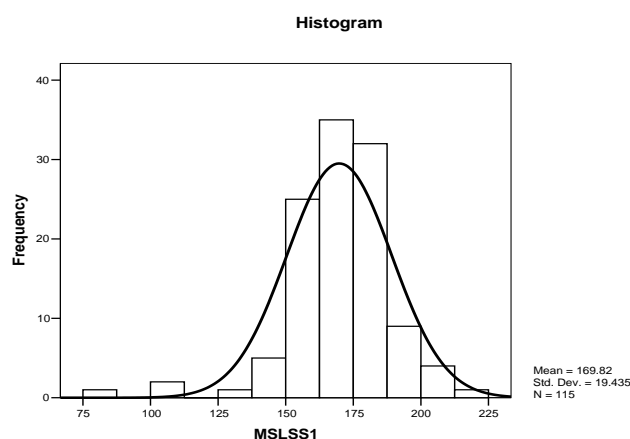


Figure-1: Histogram with Normal Probability Curve of MSLSS Scores of the School Going Adolescents (Female & Male) as a Whole

Table-1(a): Group Statistics of MSLSS Score of Female and Male School Going Adolescents

Life Satisfaction	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Family	Female	64	14.97	3.276
	Male	51	15.33	2.046
Friends	Female	64	13.66	1.994
	Male	51	13.49	2.092
School	Female	64	15.31	3.018
	Male	51	15.67	1.936
Living Environment	Female	64	14.09	3.176
	Male	51	14.49	2.556
Self	Female	64	12.06	3.044
	Male	51	13.57	2.982
MSLSS Score	Female	64	70.09	9.639
	Male	51	72.55	5.442

Table-1(a) shows statistics of different facets of MSLSS and the total MSLSS scores of female and male school going adolescents. In case of satisfaction derived from family the means of female and male adolescents were 14.97 and 15.33 respectively; again the standard deviations were 3.276 and 2.046 respectively. Then in case of satisfaction derived from friends the means of female and male adolescents were 13.66 and 13.49 respectively; again the standard deviations were 1.994 and 2.092 respectively. Next, in case of satisfaction derived from schools the means of female and male adolescents were 15.31 and 15.67 respectively; again the standard deviations were 3.018 and 1.936 respectively. Then, in case of satisfaction derived from living environment the means of female and male adolescents were 14.09 and 14.49 respectively; again the standard deviations were 3.176 and 2.556 respectively. Next, in case of satisfaction derived from self the means of female and male adolescents were 12.06 and 13.57 respectively; again the standard deviations were 3.044 and 2.982 respectively. Finally, in case of total MSLSS scores the mean of female and male teachers were 70.09 and 72.55 respectively; again the standard deviations were 9.639 and 5.442 respectively. Figure-1(a) shows the bar diagram of means of group statistics in different facets of MSLSS score of female and male school going adolescents.

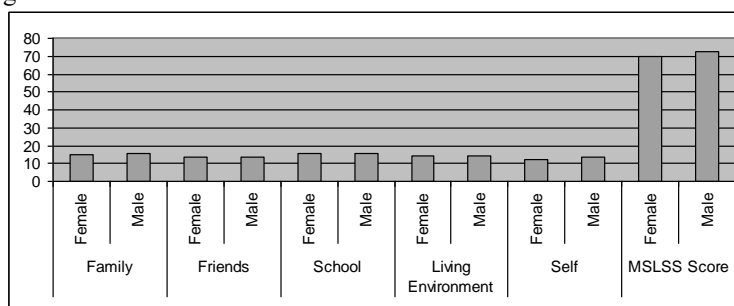


Figure-1(a): Bar Diagram of Means of Group Statistics in Different Facets of MSLSS Score of Female and Male School Going Adolescents

**Table-1(b):** Results of Independent Samples Test of Gender Wise Comparison of Means of MSLSS Score of Female and Male School Going Adolescents

Life Satisfaction		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Family	Equal variances assumed	2.658	0.106	-0.694	113	0.489
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.730	107.367	0.467
Friends	Equal variances assumed	0.125	0.724	0.434	113	0.665
	Equal variances not assumed			0.432	104.951	0.667
School	Equal variances assumed	3.040	0.084	-0.727	113	0.469
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.762	108.428	0.447
Living Environment	Equal variances assumed	4.134	0.044	-0.724	113	0.471
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.742	112.984	0.460
Self	Equal variances assumed	0.082	0.775	-2.660	113	0.009
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.666	108.271	0.009
MSLSS Score	Equal variances assumed	2.793	0.097	-1.624	113	0.107
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.722	102.760	0.088

From table-1(b) it is transparent that the two groups (female and male) differ (statistically) significantly in only one dimension of MSLSS (i.e. self satisfaction). Male adolescents are more self satisfied than their female counterparts. In other facets the two groups did not differ significantly (statistically).

### V. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

In Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) there are 40 items and with each item a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 to 5 is attached. Total scores can range at the lowest from  $(1 \times 40) = 40$  to at the highest  $(5 \times 40) = 200$  and the ambivalent (midpoint) is  $(3 \times 40) = 120$ . According to the manual of the test higher scores reflect a greater sense of life satisfaction. From the results of table-1 it is observed that MSLSS scores in totality the “minimum” of the scores was 83 and the “maximum” of those was 200 and the range was 117; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 158.93 and 19.435 respectively. This result reflects that on an average the school going adolescents were highly satisfied in their life. There are five dimensions, namely – (a) Family (8 items), (b) Friends (9 items), (c) School (8 items), (d) Living Environment (8 items), and (e) Self (7 items), in Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS).

(a) Family – There are 8 items to measure life satisfaction related to family life; the scores on these 8 items are added to get the total score in Family Satisfaction score. A person may have the score at the lowest  $(1 \times 8) = 8$  or at the highest  $(5 \times 8) = 40$ . As 3 be the midpoint of the 5 point scale the ambivalent score is  $(3 \times 8) = 24$ ; the score lower than 24 reflects the dissatisfaction and the score higher than 24 reflects the satisfaction of an individual. From table-4.1 it is observed that satisfaction on family life the “minimum” of the scores was 8 and the “maximum” of those was 40 and the range was 32; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 30.26 and 5.585 respectively. This result reflects that on an average the school going adolescents were highly satisfied in their family life.

(b) Friends – There are 9 items in this scale. So an individual may have the score at the lowest  $(1 \times 9) = 9$  or at the highest  $(5 \times 9) = 45$  and the ambivalent score is  $(3 \times 9) = 27$ . From the results of the table-4.1 it is observed that satisfaction on friends life the “minimum” of the scores was 20 and the “maximum” of those was 43 and the

range was 23; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 30.69 and 4.631 respectively. This reflects that on an average the school going adolescents were highly satisfied in relation to friends.

(c) School – The 8 items in the inventory measure the satisfaction related to school. So the lowest of the scores may be  $(1 \times 8) = 8$  and the highest  $(5 \times 8) = 40$  and the ambivalent  $(3 \times 8) = 24$ . In case of the dimension related to satisfaction of having the school the “minimum” of the scores was 13 and the “maximum” of those was 40 and the range was 27; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 34.20 and 4.974 respectively. This result also reflects that on an average the school going adolescents were highly satisfied in relation to school environment.

(d) Living Environment – Total 8 items of the inventory measure the neuroticism. The lowest score is  $(1 \times 8) = 8$  and the highest score is  $(5 \times 8) = 40$ ; the ambivalent score is  $(3 \times 8) = 24$ . In case of the dimension related to satisfaction derived from living environment the “minimum” of the scores was 19 and the “maximum” of those was 40 and the range was 21; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 34.10 and 4.744 respectively. This result also reflects that on an average the school going adolescents were highly satisfied in relation to living environment.

(e) Self – There are 7 items related to self satisfaction. The scores on these 7 items are added to get the total self satisfaction score of an individual. The minimum may be  $(1 \times 7) = 7$  and the maximum may be  $(5 \times 7) = 35$ ; as 3 be the midpoint of the 5 point scale the ambivalent score is  $(3 \times 7) = 21$ . In this facet the “minimum” of the scores was 12 and the “maximum” of those was 35 and the range was 23; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 29.68 and 3.194 respectively. This result also reflects that on an average the school going adolescents were highly satisfied in relation to living environment. From table-1(a) it is transparent that the two groups (female and male) differ (statistically) significantly only in one dimension of MSLSS (i.e. in self satisfaction). Male adolescents are more self satisfied than their female counterparts. But MSLSS as whole there was no significant difference between the female and male adolescents.

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