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# Status of Life Satisfaction of Islamic University Students at Kushtia, Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** Students' university life is considered a stressful period due to the different difficulties they encounter, such as academic pressure, parental pressure, career uncertainties, and adjusting to a new environment. Life satisfaction is considered one of the basic elements of a student's mental well-being. Therefore, the present study was conducted to assess the status of Islamic University student's life satisfaction along with its associated factors. This quantitative study surveyed 325 students at the Islamic University in Kushtia, Bangladesh during June and July 2023, using face-to-face surveys with a convenience sampling method. All data were collected using a questionnaire that included the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The sample included 202 males (62.2%) and 123 females (37.8%), with an average age of 23.26 years (SD = 1.97), mostly residing in university dormitories (60%). The data were examined using descriptive statistics, t-tests by SPSS version 26, and Microsoft Excel version 19. The present study inspected several factors affecting life satisfaction among 325 participants. Using descriptive and inferential statistics, found substantial relations between life satisfaction and factors such as current residence (t = -3.27, p =0.001), educational level (t = -2.07, p = 0.040), faculty choice (t = 3.24, p = 0.001), pressure to study (t = -3.94, p < 0.001), guardians' pressure (t = -3.92, p < 0.001), part-time jobs (t = -3.58, p < 0.001), stress (t = -2.44, p = 0.01), and mental health status (t = 4.68, p < 0.001). These results highlight the complex interplay of factors shaping students' life satisfaction. This study reveals that living arrangements, academic levels, external pressures, and mental health remarkably affect the life satisfaction of Islamic University students. It stresses the need for tailored interventions to enhance student life satisfaction in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Life satisfaction, Mental Health, University Life, Student Well-being, Islamic University

# 1. Introduction

Being happy with life is essential for everyone's overall well-being. This is especially true for university students. Their happiness often comes from how they see and feel about their own life. University life is a time when students start to act like adults, and understand what's important in their lives (Gökalp & Topal, 2019). During this phase, students are susceptible to several pressures related to their studies, personal lives, and jobs. Consequently, they often experience internal battles when confronted with emotional, interpersonal, and other challenges (Graupensperger *et al.*, 2020). So, their happiness during this time is very important. A number of factors affect the level of life satisfaction among university students. According to research, higher levels of life satisfaction are linked to having a feeling of purpose in life (Huda *et al.*, 2023). In addition, the inclination to act and work alone, referred to as the lone wolf personality, might influence one's level of life satisfaction, with positivity serving as a mediator in this association (Akdeniz & Yayci, 2023). Optimism and pessimism are two factors that affect life satisfaction (Ekinci & korkmaz, 2023). Numerous philosophers have pondered life satisfaction as a matter throughout history regarding how many individuals discover meaning in life and attain satisfaction in it. Recently, several perspectives have emerged on the subject of psychology (Gökalp & Topal, 2019). The idea of life satisfaction was initially proposed



and subsequently sparked numerous studies. Life satisfaction is achieved when all of one's expectations, needs, desires, and petitions are fulfilled. Life satisfaction is a key indicator of subjective well-being and is related to the quality of work life, nonwork life, and feelings of self-worth (Erdogan et al., 2012). It is one of three key measures of well-being: life satisfaction, positive effect, and negative effect (Diener, 1984). Positive outcomes, such as improved physical and mental health and longer life expectancy, are thought to be associated with higher levels of life satisfaction (Beutell, 2016). Higher socio-economic status, academic performance, and satisfaction with various aspects of life, including academic experience, self-esteem, and relationships, are associated with higher life satisfaction. Subjective well-being is impacted by life satisfaction, which is a judging process and a cognitive assessment of life quality that people develop according to their own standards (Shin & Johnson, 1978). Life satisfaction is a comprehensive measure of subjective well-being that encompasses several aspects of human life, such as employment, family, physical and mental health, and sexual experiences (Diener et al., 1985). Research has revealed that life satisfaction is one of the most significant indicators of successful adaptation to life, and it can be advantageous for health, longevity, and social relations (López et al., 2016). In higher education, student life satisfaction is critical for both institutional and individual student achievement, especially in today's global climate (Wong & Chapman, 2023). To conclude up, life satisfaction can be defined as an individual's emotional reaction or mindset towards their life, including their employment, leisure, and other phases of life. When it comes to the effects of university life on students' life satisfaction, however, there is a dearth of literature.

Exploring the multifaceted dimensions of life satisfaction among university students, this literature review delves into the intricate interplay of academic, social, and personal factors. Several studies were found in the context of life satisfaction in literature. Gökalp & Topal (2019) defined life satisfaction as an individual's emotional response to work, leisure, and other aspects of life. Evidence suggests that those who possess higher levels of life satisfaction exhibit greater success in interpersonal interactions, professional endeavors, and personal physical well-being (Doğan & Çelik, 2014). The findings of a study conducted by Diener (2000) among university students from seventeen countries indicate that the majority of them prioritize pleasure and life satisfaction over financial considerations. A variety of life domains influence life satisfaction, including but not limited to age, gender, socioeconomic status, academic enrollment, employment, and familial ties. Each domain significantly influences the life satisfaction of an individual (Behlau, 2010). Numerous studies have concluded that mental health influences life satisfaction, with those who enjoy a more positive mental state reporting greater life satisfaction (Dessie et al., 2013). In students, life satisfaction is influenced by numerous factors. Life satisfaction in students is often influenced by two main categories of elements: internal factors and external factors (Qudsyi et al., 2020). Internal factors refer to the variables that originate from within the individual, such as expectations (Raats, 2015). On the other hand, external factors refer to factors that arise from sources outside of the individual (Qudsyi et al., 2020). According to a study conducted by Doğan and Çelik (2014), students' life satisfaction was positively predicted by their participation in school and their level of confidence in the classroom. Additionally, this study discovered that students' life satisfaction declines with increasing grade levels. A study conducted by Kumar et al. (2016), there is a substantial negative association between life satisfaction and depression, anxiety, and stress. Gender moderates the link between life satisfaction, family satisfaction, and family support (Schnettler et al., 2017). Students living in dorms may have greater access to essential social services than those living with their families. When compared to students who live with their families, students who live in dorms tend to have higher average life satisfaction points (Doğan & Çelik, 2014). Well-being is adversely affected by anxiety, and there appears to be a strong correlation between anxiety and life satisfaction among university students. A correlation can be drawn between reduced anxiety scores and greater life satisfaction among students, as suggested by the findings of this study (Tsitsas et al., 2019). There is an inverse relationship between life satisfaction and depression, anxiety, and loneliness, while there is a positive relationship between life satisfaction and health (Samaranayake et al., 2014). An investigation by Wang et al. (2022) showed that physical exercise exhibits a positive correlation with self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and subjective well-being among college students, hence impacting their overall life satisfaction. A study by Zuo et al. (2022) discovered that parental pressure was correlated with increased academic stress and decreased autonomy, both of which hurt life satisfaction. Another study discovered that parental support, rather than parental control or autonomy giving, influences adolescent life happiness over time (Saha et al., 2010). In terms of life satisfaction based on different faculties, a study revealed that the life satisfaction ratings of university students vary among departments, with 13% attributed to inter-departmental variations and 87% attributed to intra-student variations (Pekdogan & Yurtçu, 2022). A study





conducted in India revealed that the marital status of individuals is a notable demographic factor that significantly impacts the level of life satisfaction among students (Khera, 2022).

# 1.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the factors affecting the life satisfaction of Islamic University students in Kushtia, Bangladesh. Factors such as gender, family background, residential status, academic level, and other pertinent aspects will be examined. Through an exploration of these factors, the study seeks to offer insights that can guide interventions and policies designed to enhance the overall well-being of students.

# 2. Methods

# 2.1 Participants

This study was carried out on 325 students at the Islamic University in Kushtia, Bangladesh during June and July 2023. The group consisted of 202 males (62.2%) and 123 females (37.8%), with an average age of 23.26 years (SD = 1.97) and ages ranging from 20 to 26 years. There were 94 postgraduate students (28.9%). Most of the students (60%) lived in the university hall, while 51 (15.7%) commuted from home and 79 (24.3%) resided in a Mess. The study only included students from the Islamic University in Kushtia, Bangladesh. Data was collected through a face-to-face survey, using a convenience sampling method.

# 2.2 Procedure

The research data was gathered from both the departments and halls. Participants first filled out a form with personal and behavioral information, then they were asked to provide their opinions on all items of the scale by ticking  $(\sqrt)$  marks. They were encouraged to answer all questions honestly and sincerely. Any issues faced by the respondents while answering the questions were clarified. There was no time limit for answering the questions. After the task was completed, the questionnaires were collected and the participants were thanked for their cooperation. The raw scores for each item were added up to calculate the total score, resulting in the final score for each respondent.

#### 2.3 Measuring instruments

# 2.3.1 Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The Bengali version of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), adapted by Ilyas, (2001) was used to assess the participant's life satisfaction. The SWLS was first developed by Diener et al. (1985) and it is a five-item 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Therefore, an individual's life satisfaction score might vary between 5 and 35, where a higher number indicates a better level of life satisfaction. An individual's level of satisfaction on the SWLS can be categorized as follows: extremely satisfied (31-35), satisfied (26-30), slightly satisfied (21-25), neutral (20), slightly dissatisfied (15-19), dissatisfied (10-14) and extremely dissatisfied (5-9). The scale has been testified to have high internal consistency and temporal reliability. Correlations between the SWLS and other SWB measures (e.g., the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale) are moderately strong. A substantial correlation between the English and Bangla versions [r (28) = 0.626, p < .001] showed the translation reliability of the scale. A highly significant correlation [r (48) = 0.662, p < .001] between the scores of the two administrations showed the test-retest reliability of the Bangla version. A high alpha coefficient (r = 0.74) further showed the internal consistency of the scale (Hossain *et al.*, 2018).

# 2.3.2 Ethics approval

While the research team was unable to secure formal ethical clearance due to the nonappearance of an established committee at the Islamic University, rest guaranteed that the researchers diligently followed the ethical guidelines outlined in the Helsinki Declaration during the study. Researchers provided participants with a concise informed consent form, and clearly explained all ethical considerations. Confidentiality was maintained, and no personal information (such as names, addresses, or contact details) was collected. Participants were not financially





remunerated and had the freedom to decline to answer any questions. Additionally, respected professors reviewed the research questionnaire to ensure alignment with ethical standards and scholarly principles.

# 3. Results

# 3.1. Statistical analysis

In this study, data from 325 respondents were analyzed. Descriptive statistics were used to highlight demographic features, while inferential statistics (including t-tests) explored significant differences and relationships among variables. 95% confidence intervals were established for estimates with a significance level of p < 0.05. The analyses were performed using SPSS version 26 and Microsoft Excel 2019. The dependent variable of this study was the Status of Life Satisfaction, while independent variables encompassed gender, family type, family status, present residence, education level, faculty, feeling own pressure to study, feeling guardian pressure to study, feeling stress, mental health status, part-time job, and exercise.

Satisfaction category Recommended score range Frequency of respondents **Percent** Extremely dissatisfied 5-9 6 1.8 Dissatisfied 10-14 27 8.3 Slightly dissatisfied 15-19 68 20.9 Neutral 20 24 7.4 Slightly satisfied 21-25 116 35.7 Satisfied 26-30 75 23.1 9 2.8 Extremely satisfied 31-35 Total 325 100.0

**Table 1.** Recommended cut-off scores and respondents' scores of life satisfaction

In this study of 325 participants, researchers discovered a broad range of life satisfaction. A small but noteworthy 2.8% (9 individuals) reported being extremely satisfied with their lives. Satisfaction was expressed by 23.1% (75 students), and a slightly satisfied sentiment was shared by the majority, 35.7% (116 students). Neutral feelings were reported by 7.4% (24 individuals). As researchers move towards the other end of the spectrum, 20.9% (68 students) were slightly dissatisfied, 8.3% (27 students) were dissatisfied, and a small group of 1.8% (6 students) reported being extremely dissatisfied. These findings provide a snapshot of life satisfaction among our participants, highlighting the diversity of experiences and feelings within our sample. It's a reminder that every individual's journey is unique, and satisfaction can differ widely (Table 1).

In this table 2, we've conducted t-tests to discover the association between various factors and students' life satisfaction. The mean life satisfaction score for males was 21.94 (SD = 4.99), and for females, it was 21.43 (SD = 5.80), presenting no statistically significant difference (t(323) = 0.84, p = 0.40). Family type (single vs. joint) and family status (lower class vs. middle class) also didn't reveal significant differences in student's life satisfaction. However, the current residence demonstrated significance, with students in university accommodation (M = 22.53, SD = 4.52) having higher life satisfaction than those in off-campus residence (M = 20.48, SD = 5.15; t(272) = -3.27, p = 0.001). Educational level yielded substantial results, with Hons 1st year students (M = 21.09, SD = 5.41) reporting lower life satisfaction than Masters students (M = 23.01, SD = 5.38; t(145) = -2.07, p = 0.040). Faculty choice also played a significant role, where BBA students (M = 23.01, SD = 5.17) exhibited higher satisfaction than Social Science students (M = 20.27, SD = 5.82; t(163) = 3.24, p = 0.001) and Science students (M = 21.41, SD = 5.26; t(160) = 1.98, p = 0.049). Feeling pressure to study, guardians' pressure to study, and having a part-time job notably impacted student's life satisfaction. Participants feeling pressure to study (M = 20.93, SD = 5.32) or experiencing guardian pressure (M = 20.32, SD = 5.31) stated lower satisfaction compared to their counterparts (t (323) = -3.94, p < 0.001; t (323) = -3.94, p < 0.001).





**Table 2.** Frequency, mean difference, standard deviation, t-test, and p-value of life satisfaction total score in terms of genders, types of family, present residence, family status, level of education, types of faculty, feeling own pressure for study, feeling guardian pressure for study, self-reported feeling of anxiety, self-reported mental health status, part-time job, and doing exercise

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	t- value	df	p-value
Gender	Male	202	21.94	4.99	.84	323	.40
	Female	123	21.43	5.80			
Family type	Single	257	21.88	5.42	.87	323	.34
	Joint	68	21.25	4.84			
Family status	Lower class	71	21.42	5.36	58	323	.56
	Middle class	254	21.84	5.30			
Present residence	Off-Campus Residence	79	20.48	5.15	-3.27	272	.001
	University dormitory	195	22.53	4.52			
Educational level	Hons 1 <sup>st</sup> year	53	21.09	5.41	-2.07	145	.040
	Masters	94	23.01	5.38			
Faculty (1)	BBA	92	23.01	5.17	3.24	163	.001
	Social Science	73	20.27	5.82			
Faculty (2)	BBA	92	23.01	5.17	1.98	160	.049
	Science	70	21.41	5.26			
Felling own pressure to study	Yes	215	20.93	5.32	-3.94	323	<.001
	No	110	23.34	4.93			
Felling Guardian pressure to study	Yes	125	20.32	5.31	-3.92	323	<.001
	No	200	22.64	5.12			
Feeling stress	Yes	120	20.82	5.74	-2.44	323	.01
	No	205	22.29	4.97			
Mental Health Status	Good	149	23.05	5.33	4.68	146	<.001
	Not good	39	18.44	5.98			
Part-time job	Yes	54	19.43	5.51	-3.58	323	<.001
	No	271	22.21	5.15			
Exercise	Yes	169	22.21	5.29	1.62	323	.10
	No	156	21.25	5.30			



Participants with part-time jobs (M = 19.43, SD = 5.51) displayed lower satisfaction than those without having part-time jobs (M = 22.21, SD = 5.15; t (323) = -3.58, p < 0.001). Additionally, feeling stress demonstrated a significant impact on student's life satisfaction, with participants feeling stress (M = 20.82, SD = 5.74) having lower satisfaction than those who did not (M = 22.29, SD = 4.97; t (323) = -2.44, p = 0.01). Mental health status notably influenced life satisfaction, where participants reporting good mental health (M = 23.05, SD = 5.33) depicted higher satisfaction than those reporting not-good mental health (M = 18.44, SD = 5.98; t (146) = 4.68, p < 0.001). Finally, participants who stated engaging in exercise (M = 22.21, SD = 5.29) had somewhat higher satisfaction scores compared to those who did not (M = 21.25, SD = 5.30), although this variance was not statistically significant (t (323) = 1.62, p = 0.10). In summary, these findings showed the multifaceted nature of factors influencing students' life satisfaction, encompassing not just academic aspects but also mental health, external pressures, and living conditions.

# 4. Discussion

Life satisfaction is a variable that varies from person to person. A person's life satisfaction depends on many factors such as; a student's life satisfaction depends on academic pressure, mental pressure, parental pressure, economic condition, part-time job, and current residence, etc. The primary focus of this study was to assess the level of life satisfaction of university students in Bangladesh specifically at Islamic University, Bangladesh. Based on the results of data analysis using descriptive statistics with t-tests the following results were obtained. The results of the study revealed that the majority of participants in the study articulated overall satisfaction with their lives, with 23.1% reporting extreme satisfaction and 35.7% representing a slightly satisfied sentiment. On the contrary, a small proportion of students reported dissatisfaction, with 8.3% stating dissatisfaction and 1.8% reporting extreme dissatisfaction.

The findings of the present study revealed that students living in university accommodation reported higher scores in life satisfaction than those living in off-campus residences (M = 20.48, SD = 5.15; t(272) = -3.27, p = 0.001). This result shows similarities with a previous study conducted by Doğan & Çelik (2014) in their study, they showed that the average life satisfaction points for students living in dorms were higher than the average for students who live outside of campus. This may be because dormitory students may have more access to basic social services compared to those living off campus. On the other hand, a further study carried out in Turkey revealed a correlation between life satisfaction and living arrangements, indicating that persons residing in dorms had greater levels of anger-in ratings in comparison to those living in houses (Oke *et al.*, 2017).

According to the results of our study, the level of education impacts students' degree of satisfaction as Hon's 1st-year students depict lower levels of life satisfaction than those of Masters students t(145) = -2.07, p = 0.040. However, a research paper Behlau (2010) presents a contrasting situation, indicating that undergraduate students generally exhibit a higher level of life satisfaction compared to graduate students. Similar results were observed in a Chinese study conducted by Zhang et al. (2014) in which they showed that first-year students tend to score higher on life satisfaction than students in other grades, and this satisfaction is positively associated with female gender, self-esteem, social support, and liberal attitudes toward female gender roles. But in some cases, graduate students show higher levels of life satisfaction than undergraduates such as living situations, handling feelings, area of work, use of time and so on (Behlau, 2010).

Life satisfaction among university students can be influenced by various factors, including personal circumstances, academic demands, social interactions, faculty choice and other related aspects (Rogowska *et al.*, 2021). The present study found that the level of life satisfaction among university students varies from faculty to faculty, where BBA faculty students showed higher level of life satisfaction than social science and science faculty students (t = 3.24, p = 0.001; t = 1.98, p = 0.049). This may be due to BBA students' higher integration with internships, practical learning experience with different companies, integrated syllabus and co-curricular activities with different student clubs.

It is found that some factors i.e., feeling pressure to study, guardians' pressure to study and having a part-time job significantly impact students' life satisfaction. Students who feel pressure to study experience lower levels of life satisfaction (t = -3.94, p < 0.001). A result that agrees with other research studies (Rathakrishnan *et al.*,



2022; Yang, 2022). In the present study, researchers also found that experiencing quardian pressure (t = -3.92, p < 0.001) contributes to lower level of life satisfaction among university students. Research shows that university students' life satisfaction is negatively affected by parental pressure (Ma & Song, 2023). So, it is evident that family or quardian pressure impacts university students' life satisfaction directly or indirectly and our findings prove it. Having a part-time job is also a matter of headache for university students which leads them towards lower level of life satisfaction. The present study found that students with part-time jobs depict lower levels of life satisfaction than those who don't have (t = -3.58, p < 0.001). A similar result was seen in a research paper (Tsitsas *et al.*, 2019), in which they showed that non-working students had much higher life satisfaction than working students. The current study discovered that students with feeling stressed are less satisfied with life than those didn't have stress (t = -2.44, p = 0.01). The results of the immediately preceding study indicate that students with low-stress levels report greater life satisfaction than those with high stress levels. The result of this research is quite similar to (Özavci et al., 2023), as they depicted that there is a significant correlation between stress and life satisfaction among university students. Finally, investigators found that mental health status significantly impacts university students' level of life satisfaction, where students reporting good mental health showed higher life satisfaction than those reporting notgood mental health (t = 4.68, p < 0.001). Numerous studies have even shown that life satisfaction has an important role in individual mental health (Özavci et al., 2023). A study conducted by Kumar et al. (2016) in which they showed that mental health issues manifest as varying degrees of stress, anxiety, and depression, all of which have a substantial impact on the life satisfaction and social and interpersonal connections of the affected individual. The other study by Sujan et al. (2022) depicted that the mental well-being of university students negatively affects their overall life satisfaction. So, it's also clear that mental health has a contribution to university students' mental health. In conclusion, this study shows that living arrangements, academic levels, external pressures, and mental health interact in complex ways, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms to improve life satisfaction for university students.

# 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the intricate dynamics influencing the life satisfaction of university students at the Islamic University in Kushtia, Bangladesh. Through extensive analysis, we found that factors such as living arrangements, academic levels, external pressures, and mental health significantly impact students' overall satisfaction with life. Specifically, students living in university dormitories and pursuing higher academic levels tend to report higher levels of satisfaction. Conversely, pressures related to academic prospects, part-time jobs, and stress negatively affect students' well-being. Moreover, the findings of the study underscore the critical role of mental health in shaping life satisfaction among university students. Overall, this study underlines the need for tailored interventions and support systems to enhance the well-being and life satisfaction of university students in Bangladesh.

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