

## **Life Satisfaction of University Science Students**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The present study is an analysis of the differences in Life Satisfaction of Science students studying in North-Eastern Hill University. It may be mentioned that related literature supports that there are differences in Life Satisfaction amongst different group of students in universities. For the purpose of the study, necessary information was gathered through the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SwLS). The t-test was applied to find out the significant group differences. The results revealed significant differences in the groups of students. The present study contributes to the understanding of differences in Life Satisfaction of the different groups of students in the university arena.*

**Keywords:** *Life Satisfaction, Gender, Category, Community, Domicile, Residence, Semester and School*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Subsequent to striving for the things we need and want to in life, we also look forward to remain satisfied with these life experiences. Hence, at the end of the day Life Satisfaction becomes very important. This is so because it helps us refocus on the very same experiences and judge for ourselves whether we are satisfied or not with the experiences, which, therefore determines the level of Life Satisfaction that we have. On analysing the experiences, it also makes us aware that we need to plan for our future, make appropriate choices in life which will help raise the level of life satisfaction. Life Satisfaction helps us judge our satisfaction with life as a whole. Life Satisfaction refers to a cognitive judgemental process (Diener et. al., 1985). It is a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his chosen criteria (Shin & Johnson, 1978).

The study of level of life satisfaction helps us focus on the things around us. Research studies revealed that adolescents with very high levels of life satisfaction reported significantly higher mean scores on all measures of school (i.e., Structure Extracurricular Activities, school satisfaction, academic aspirations, academic achievement, attitude to education), interpersonal (i.e., parental relations, peer relations, social acceptance), and intrapersonal variables (i.e., life meaning, gratitude, aspirations, self-esteem, happiness, positive affect, healthy lifestyle) than adolescents reporting very low levels of life satisfaction (Proctor, Linley & Maltby, 2010; Rode et. al., 2005).

Across the life span of youth including the life span of university students (which is the purview of the study), there are many determinants that settled on their life satisfaction. Proctor, Linley & Maltby (2009) reviewed literature on *Youth Life Satisfaction* and brought out the details of how life satisfaction among youth relates to various other important emotional, social, and behavioural constructs. Amongst the university students in Finland, most important influences on students' levels of satisfaction are social relationships, resources and the educational environment, personal goal achieving and extracurricular activities (Mangeloloja & Hirvonen, 2007). A study on students of Czech University indicated that active lifestyle may positively influence the overall level of life satisfaction (Kvintova, Kudláček & Sigmundová, 2016). Mihanović, Batinić and Pavičić (2016) studied Croatian student's satisfaction with university contents, university bodies and services, teaching, teaching methods and academic reputation affects the satisfaction of student life and student life satisfaction affect the student performance. Khan, Shirazi and Ahmed (2011) found that in India spirituality is a positive significant predictor of life satisfaction. Many other studies supported that there are still many more determinants of Life Satisfaction.

Further, research studies have delved much in the differences in Life Satisfaction between different demographic variables in university students. With the similar aim in mind, the present study is conducted in order to find out the differences with reference to the different demographic variables of the science students studying in North-Eastern Hill University. The findings of this study are expected to satisfy academic interest apart from attainment in-depth understanding of the same. Further it will help in identifying, valuing and accepting the importance of life satisfaction among university students.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objective has been formulated for the present study:

1. To find out the differences in Life Satisfaction amongst Science Students of North-Eastern Hill University with regards to the following demographic variables: (a) Male and Female (b) Tribal and Nontribal (c)

Native (Khasi, Pnar, Garo) of Meghalaya and students belonging to other Community (d) students who are Domicile of Meghalaya and students who are Domicile of other states (e) Hosteller and Non-hosteller (f) Fourth Semester students and Second Semester students (g) students from School of Life Sciences and students from School of Physical Sciences.

### ***Null Hypothesis***

The following Null hypothesis has been formulated for the present study:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in Life Satisfaction between (a) Male and Female (b) Tribal and Nontribal (c) Native (Khasi, Pnar, Garo) of Meghalaya and students belonging to other Community (d) students who are Domicile of Meghalaya and students who are Domicile of other states (e) Hosteller and Non-hosteller (f) Fourth Semester students and Second Semester students (g) students from School of Life Sciences and students from School of Physical Sciences.

### ***Operational Definition of Terms Used***

In the present study the terms are operationally defined as follows:

Gender refer to both Male and Female sex.

Category refers to the different social and cultural category of Tribal (belonging to Scheduled Tribe category) and Nontribal (General, Scheduled Caste and Other Backward Class).

Community refer to the population who are the Native inhabitant of Meghalaya (that is the Khasi, the Pnar (Jaintia) and Garo tribes). It also includes the population of Nontribal from Meghalaya, and the Tribal and Nontribal from different states of North East India studying in North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU).

Domicile refers to the Tribal and Nontribal residents of Meghalaya. It also includes the residents (both Tribal and Nontribal) from the other states studying in NEHU.

Residence refers to the place of stay of the students at the time of studying in NEHU that is the Hosteller and Non-hosteller.

Semester refer to the period of six months where students involve in learning, and earn specific credit. There are four semesters (First, Second, Third, Fourth) in a Master's Degree course. At the time of data collection the sample of the study are in the Fourth and Second Semesters.

School refers to the cluster of closely related departments that is under the authority of a single dean. In this study the two schools are Schools of Life Sciences and Physical Sciences.

## **II. METHOD**

### ***Participants***

The participants of the study include 331 students of North-Eastern Hill University, Shilong, Meghalaya. The sample was selected using the stratified random sampling.

### ***Method***

The descriptive method is used in the study.

### ***Tool***

The tool used in the study is the Satisfaction with life Scale (SwLS). It was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larson, and Griffin (1985 to assess satisfaction with the respondent's life as a whole (Pavot & Diener, 1993). It is a five item measure with statements rated on a seven point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7. The total score of the scale ranges from 5 to 35.

### ***Statistical Analysis***

For analysing the data, the descriptive statistics such as Means, Standard Deviation and Reliability were used. To assess the mean differences of the groups on the variable under study, the t-test was used.

## **III. RESULTS**

The collected data of science students studying in North-Eastern Hill University were analysed and the result is shown in the following tables:-

The Mean scores of the different groups are given in the table I below. These groups are - Male, Female, Tribal, Nontribal, Native (Khasi, Pnar, Garo) of Meghalaya, students belonging to other Community, students who are Domicile of Meghalaya, students who are Domicile of other states, Hosteller, Non-hosteller, Fourth Semester students, Second Semester students, students from School of Life Sciences, and students from School of Physical Sciences.

**Table I:** Mean scores of Different Groups

Measure	Group	N	Mean	SD	
Life Satisfaction	Gender	Male	154	21.55	5.352
		Female	177	22.73	5.180
	Category	Tribal	269	22.49	5.358
		Nontribal	62	20.87	4.779
	Community	Native (Khasi, Pnar, Garo) of Meghalaya	194	22.91	5.296
		Other Community	137	21.16	5.118
	Domicile	Meghalaya	216	22.73	5.190
		Other States	115	21.17	5.336
	Residence	Hosteller	159	21.67	5.311
		Non-hosteller	172	22.66	5.232
	Semester	Fourth Semester	144	22.23	5.215
		Second Semester	187	22.15	5.353
	School	Life Sciences	154	22.19	5.215
		Physical Sciences	177	22.18	5.361

Table I shows that in Life Satisfaction, the Male students (154) had a mean score of 21.55 ( $SD = 5.352$ ), the Female students (177) had a mean score of 22.73 ( $SD = 5.180$ ), the Tribal students (269) had a mean score of 22.49 ( $SD = 5.358$ ), the Nontribal students (62) had a mean score of 20.87 ( $SD = 4.779$ ), the students who are Native (Khasi, Pnar, Garo) of Meghalaya (194) had a mean score of 22.91 ( $SD = 5.296$ ), the students of Other Community (137) had a mean score of 21.16 ( $SD = 5.118$ ), the students who are Domicile of Meghalaya (216) had a mean score of 22.73 ( $SD = 5.190$ ), the students who are Domicile of Other States (115) had a mean score of 21.17 ( $SD = 5.336$ ), the Hosteller (159) had a mean score of 21.67 ( $SD = 5.311$ ), the Non-hosteller (172) had a mean score of 22.66 ( $SD = 5.232$ ), the Fourth Semester students (144) had a mean score of 22.23 ( $SD = 5.215$ ), the Second Semester students (187) had a mean score of 22.15 ( $SD = 5.353$ ), the students from the School of Life Sciences (154) had a mean score of 22.19 ( $SD = 5.215$ ), the students from the School of Physical Sciences (177) had a mean score of 22.18 ( $SD = 5.361$ ).

The reliability or internal consistency of the Satisfaction with Life Scale is given in Table II.

**Table II:** Reliability (alpha) of Satisfaction with Life Scale

Measure	Relationship	Alpha
Life Satisfaction	Satisfaction with Life Scale	.668
	All 5 items-Total	.760
	Item1-Total	.578
	Item2-Total	.676
	Item3-Total	.735
	Item4-Total	.700
	Item5-Total	.624

In Table II, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) was computed on Life Satisfaction. Results revealed that Satisfaction with Life Scale (SwLS) has an alpha of .668. The alpha of all five items of SwLS and total is .760. Also, substantial item-total coefficient of the five items separately with the total are .578, .676, .735, .700, and .624 respectively.

The Life Satisfaction of University Students according to Gender, Category, Community, Domicile, Residence, Semester and School are given below (see Table III).

**Table III:** Life Satisfaction of University Students according to Gender, Category, Community, Domicile, Residence, Semester and School

Measure	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig.	
Life Satisfaction	Gender	Male	154	21.55	5.352	329	2.040*	.042
		Female	177	22.73	5.180			
	Category	Tribal	269	22.49	5.358	329	2.183*	.030
		Nontribal	62	20.87	4.779			
	Community	Native (Khasi, Pnar, Garo) of Meghalaya	194	22.91	5.296	329	2.997**	.003
		Others	137	21.16	5.118			
	Domicile	Meghalaya	216	22.73	5.190	329	2.581**	.010
		Other States	115	21.17	5.336			
	Residence	Hosteller	159	21.67	5.311	329	1.718	.087
		Non-hosteller	172	22.66	5.232			
	Semester	Fourth	144	22.23	5.215	329	.135	.892
		Second	187	22.15	5.353			
	School	Life Sciences	154	22.19	5.215	329	.013	.990
		Physical Sciences	177	22.18	5.361			

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

The t-test in the Table III reflected the significant differences (and no significant differences) in the groups of: Gender between Male and Female, Category between Tribal and Nontribal, Community between Native (Khasi, Pnar, Garo) of Meghalaya and students belonging to other Community, Domicile between all students of Meghalaya and students who are Domicile of other states, Residence between Hosteller and Non-hosteller, Semester between Fourth Semester students and Second Semester students, and School between students from School of Life Sciences and students from School of Physical Sciences. The result of the study may be given below:

An independent sample t-test showed that the difference in Life Satisfaction scores between Male (N= 154, M= 21.55, SD= 5.352) and Female (N= 177, M= 22.73, SD= 5.180) were statistically significant,  $t(329) = 2.040$ ,  $p = .042$ .

An independent sample t-test showed that the difference in Life Satisfaction scores between Tribal (N= 269, M= 22.49, SD= 5.358) and Nontribal (N= 62, M= 20.87, SD= 4.779) were statistically significant,  $t(329) = 2.183$ ,  $p = .030$ .

An independent sample t-test showed that the difference in Life Satisfaction scores between Native (Khasi, Pnar, Garo) of Meghalaya (N= 194, M= 22.91, SD= 5.269) and students belonging to other Community (N= 137, M= 21.16, SD= 5.118) were statistically significant,  $t(329) = 2.997$ ,  $p = .003$ .

An independent sample t-test showed that the difference in Life Satisfaction scores between students who are Domicile of Meghalaya (N= 216, M= 22.73, SD= 5.190) and students who are Domicile of other states (N= 115, M= 21.17, SD= 5.336) were statistically significant,  $t(329) = 2.581$ ,  $p = .010$ .

An independent sample t-test showed that the difference in Life Satisfaction scores between Hosteller (N= 159, M= 21.67, SD= 5.311) and Non-hosteller (N= 172, M= 22.66, SD= 5.232) were statistically not significant,  $t(329) = 1.718$ ,  $p = .087$ .

An independent sample t-test showed that the difference in Life Satisfaction scores between Fourth Semester students (N= 144, M= 22.23, SD= 5.215) and Second Semester students (N= 187, M= 22.15, SD= 5.353) were statistically significant,  $t(329) = .135$ ,  $p = .892$ .

An independent sample t-test showed that the difference in Life Satisfaction scores between students from School of Life Sciences (N= 154, M= 22.19, SD= 5.215) and students from School of Physical Sciences (N= 177, M= 22.18, SD= 5.361) were statistically significant,  $t(329) = .013$ ,  $p = .990$ .

Based on the result of the study, the Null hypotheses were rejected for (a) Male and Female (b) Tribal and Nontribal (c) Native (Khasi, Pnar, Garo) of Meghalaya and students belonging to other Community (d) Domicile of Meghalaya and Domicile of other states, since there were significant difference between the groups. However the Null Hypotheses for the group (e) Hosteller and Non-hosteller (f) Fourth Semester students and Second Semester students and (g) students from School of Life Sciences and students from School of Physical Sciences, failed to be rejected as there were no significant difference between them.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION**

Findings of the study show differences in Gender, Category, Community and Domicile groups. Further the study suggested that there are no differences in the Residence, Semester and School groups. With regards to Gender, Female science students in the university exhibit higher Life Satisfaction than Male students. This is in line with the study of Mahanta and Aggarwal (2013) who reported that female university students have a higher satisfaction with life as compared to male university students. This finding implies that the female students are more satisfied with life than their male counterpart. This may be a fine finding as most of the female participants in the study are the tribal native of Meghalaya belonging to a matrilineal society. The society gives importance to its womenfolk; therefore the result is a positive effect towards people and their life. Among the Category group, the Tribal students have higher Life Satisfaction than Nontribal students. This may be because Tribal students feel more at home in the university where the Tribal population dominates the campus. In relation to the Community group the Native (Khasi, Pnar, Garo) of Meghalaya exhibit higher Life Satisfaction than students belonging to other Community. This may be because the Native tribal of Meghalaya are in their own land studying in the university which is particularly establish for the students of the region, and because they are studying in their own locale. For the Domicile group, the Domiciles of Meghalaya have higher Life Satisfaction than the students who are Domiciles of other states. This may be because the procedure which goes in and around the university is more localized and familiar with the domiciles of the state. With reference to Residence group, the Non-hosteller scored higher than Hostellers, yet there was no significant difference between the groups. This may be that the Non-hosteller are satisfied as they stay in their own residences with their loved ones, however Hosteller are also satisfied with their life in relation to the place of residence as the hostel facilities are satisfactory. This finding is contrast to the finding of Shakeel, Shakeel and Fatima (2015) that day scholar have well quality of life and life satisfaction as compared to hostel students. Similarly in the Semester

group, the Fourth semester students scored higher than the Second semester students, yet there was no significant difference between the groups. This may be that both the students studying in the two different semesters received the same type of services from their teachers, infrastructure, university facilities, teaching learning facilities, etc. except the curriculum specific to the two semesters. Also, the students from Schools of Life Sciences and Physical Sciences attained similar score, reflecting that there was no significant difference between the groups of students. This may be because both the groups have a similar background of science, which is at par in every field of learning, skills, learning orientation, facilities provided and presence of competent teachers.

## V. CONCLUSION

With the research findings of the present study, it may be concluded that the differences which existed between the different groups is more in relation to gender, place and culture. But there were no significant differences in the life satisfaction of the students in terms of the place of residence. Neither in the case of services rendered and received by the students, that is neither the semester nor the course of study, as both the groups are the science groups. However, the present study is limited in terms of capacity for drawing causal inference towards the determinants of Life satisfaction amongst university students. The findings of the study have given an insight on the life satisfaction of the science students. With further research there will be greater understanding of the determinants of life satisfaction of science students and therefore help bring better programmes and intervention to further enhance their life satisfaction and better life.

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