



The Relationship Between Perceived Stress and Life Satisfaction During COVID-19 Among University Teachers

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Abstract: This research aims to see the association between perceived stress and satisfaction with life among university teachers during COVID-19. It was hypothesized that there would be significant relationship between the perceived stress and life satisfaction among university teachers. Participants who scored low on perceived stress would score high on the life satisfaction scale and vice versa. There would be a significant difference among genders in perceived stress and life satisfaction. The sample comprises 200 participants from the diverse universities of Sindh through a random sampling technique. The participants' age range was between 24 to 60 years. Data was collected by self-administered form via in-person and online. Demographic information was taken, which includes Age, Gender, University, Qualification and Post in their respective departments or institutes. The measures of the Perceived Stress Scale (Sheldon Cohen, 1983) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener et al. (1985) were administered respectively. To analyze the results, the correlation coefficient and t-value were used to see the relationship between variables and gender differences through SPSS vol. 25. The result reveals a significant relationship between perceived stress and satisfaction with life. The correlation coefficient of both variables is significant at the level of 0.05. The result also shows a significant gender difference in that females show more stress than males, which also makes a difference on the scale of satisfaction with life.

Keywords: Perceived Stress, Satisfaction with Life, University Teachers, Covid-19

1.Introduction

Since December 2019, there has been a new infectious disease affected by the coronavirus, which has been producing an occurrence of severe contagious pneumonia in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. This illness has spread all over the world within a very short period. As a result, it was said to be a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). The disease's medical progress ranges from moderate to asymptomatic to acute respiratory problems and demise. Critically sick patients made up 23.4 percent of the total. According to the WHO, COVID-19 mortality is estimated to be around 5.5 percent (WHO, 2020).

As COVID-19 remains spread on this universal scale, it is causing many countries to consume the most significant economic capability of resources, technology associate, and degraded human resources (Jandrić, Petar H, et al. and Gamage KA, et al. 2020). Consequently, there is a need to develop advanced methods for the educational arena from the classroom setting to the virtual setting, inducing usage of various electrical podiums, for instance, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Classrooms, and Moodle, to stay connected with students to clear their confusion (Johns Hopkins, 2020). The fast spread of COVID-19 worldwide has a negative impression on health, society, psychology, the economy, and education. In order to fight this virus on a universal scale, the closure of educational institutions is one of the foremost standard measures to keep social distancing and reduce infections (Sheikh et al., 2020; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020; Viner et al., 2020).

All academies and institutions were asked to close, and it was prohibited to leave the house (unless to meet the most basic living necessities). There were severe consequences for disobeying quarantine laws. It was also observed that, in addition to physical health issues, this virus also has a negative impact on the individual's psychological well-being. Even if the vast majority of people do not become infected by COVID-19, they also experience psychological problems during the pandemic. This pandemic is a primary source of apprehension due to its fast spread, high infections, high death ratio in severe cases, and a lack of medicine and vaccines (Xiao et al., 2020). Individuals are expected to experience emotional distress during the pandemic as a result of ambiguity about the upcoming, anxiety of becoming diseased, news of new confirmed cases, and an increase in the passing ratio (Zhang et al., 2020).

People dealing with joblessness, sorrow, long-lasting sicknesses, well-being challenges, and those who must manage household difficulties while employed at home may have higher levels of perceived stress. Apparent correlations between epidemic anxiety, heightened worry, and health anxiety have been documented in prior global pandemics. Increased fear has been linked to sanitary behaviors, including hand cleaning and avoiding public transportation and crowds (Zhang et al., 2020).

Several research studies have shown that in confinement, teachers struggle to adapt (in record time) to supply online courses (Besser et al., 2020). Another study showed that the crisis caused teachers to suffer from issues concerning the outburst, like anxiety, depression, and stress, all of which limit their ability to work diligently (Al liliaceous Plant et al., 2020). Several studies suggested that during the pandemic, teachers suffered from anxiety, and there are also gender differences. Notably, it was observed that girls were more anxious than men, and additionally, they had more severe symptoms (Li et al., 2020).

Due to the pandemic, people's lives have changed and are being managed inadequately. People may experience adjustment problems, and as a result, they may feel less satisfaction with life. Nevertheless, it was also observed that everyone who bared this life transition experience will experience adjustment problems or dissatisfaction with life. Several people acquire to adjust the life transition successfully by preserving their level of life satisfaction regardless of the increased stress level (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Worry is not always the triggering point for emotional distress, but it is a two-way dealing process where individuals interact with their environment. In other words, it can be said that stress can impact a person's life negatively only when they perceive the situation as stressful. This is known as perceived stress, which is how an individual perceives stress. As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic's consequences are expected to be linked to worry, apprehension, and distress, which could lead to increased psychological issues affecting individuals' quality of life (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The prior studies found that happiness in life was linked to better COVID-19 mental health outcomes. Indeed, it could be viewed not only as a product of several dispositional and environmental factors but also as a factor that influences various life outcomes (Pavot W, and Diener E, 2009). It is an important component of subjective well-being that is linked to decreased perceived stress and its effects, as well as more positive health-related behaviors and, as a result, more excellent physical health. The worldwide intellectual self-judgment of welfare across an

extensive diversity of human activities at university, work, intimate, and societal life can be characterized as satisfaction with life.

Life satisfaction is a significant predictor of mental and physical health as well as effective life adaption. Although stress is a natural reaction to life changes and serves as a motivator to act, it may be damaging if it becomes regular and the individual loses the ability to deal with it (Towbes & Cohen, 1996). The combination of several elements causes this issue and is unrelated to the university stage. Indeed, regardless of personal or social factors, several factors unique to academic life are strongly linked to stress. The impact of stress on teachers' daily lives should be considered part of the educational process, as it can influence the professional training process and its outcome. The global COVID-19 pandemic is another possible stress source in university lecturers.

Life satisfaction has been the middle of consideration of the humans for the spans. The satisfaction with life entails psychological features, including subjective welfare and the cognitive judgments of the person concerning their life (Diener, E. 1984). Life satisfaction of people will be affected by several things like pleasure gained from day-to-day life, which means credited to the life, edition to the action of purposes, positive individual identity, that the person feels physically good, economical, security and social relations (Schmitter, 2003). Previous studies found a link between poor levels of life satisfaction and a variety of adjustment challenges, including an elevated long-term risk of stress, anxiety and suicide. It was also observed in prior studies that perceived stress is a significant predictor of a low level of satisfaction with life (Coffman & Gilligan, 2003).

The severity of the pandemic is linked to people's well-being, according to an American study (Mc Gee et al., 2018), and the pandemic causes individuals to experience more unpleasant feelings. As a result of the pandemic, people are more prone to feel nervous, terrified, furious, and depressed (Zhang et al., 2020). Fear can heighten anxiety and stress levels during a pandemic. Fear of COVID-19 was found to be favorably connected to worry and apprehension and adversely related to satisfaction with life (Satici et al., 2020). Furthermore, distress from COVID-19 was found to increase anxiety and tension, as well as diminish life satisfaction.

1.1 Research Objectives

The present study will help us understand concepts like perceived stress and life satisfaction and how these things are interrelated. The main objective was to understand the effect of COVID-19 on individuals' lives, how satisfied they are with their lives, and how much stress they are getting during that panic situation. It was also aimed to analyze the gender variance in managing stress.

1.2 Hypothesis

1. There would be significant relationship between the perceived stress and life satisfaction among university teachers.
2. Participants who scored low on perceived stress would score high on the life satisfaction scale and vice versa.
3. There would be a significant difference among genders in perceived stress and life satisfaction.

2. Methodology

2.1 Sample

The sample of 200 university teachers was taken from all over Sindh, which includes 100 males and 100 females, through a random sampling technique. All the participants were between the age ranges of 24-60 years, with a minimum qualification of 16 years of education. The data was collected through self-administrated online questionnaires through a random data collection technique.

2.2 Measures

Two measuring scales, i.e., perceived stress and satisfaction with life scale, were used in this research.

2.3 Demographic

Demographic information includes Age, Gender, University, Qualification, and Post in their respective departments or institutes.

2.4 Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The satisfaction with life scale is a Likert type five-item scale. It was designed to measure the cognitive assessment of the life satisfaction (Diener et al.; S., 1985). The scale uses the Likert Scale, which usually takes a few minutes for the respondents to complete. This scale is mainly suited for non-clinical adults, and the questions are open to interpretation. The scores of this scale are made up of a raw score and a final score, which ranges from 5 to 35. Higher scores on the scale can lead to higher life satisfaction. Scores from 30 to 35 show extremely pleased, Satisfied between the ages of 25 and 29, 20 to 24 years old slightly pleased and 15–19 years I am a little displeased, 10–14 years Dissatisfied and 5 to 9 years highly displeased.

2.5 Perceived Stress Scale (Sheldon Cohen, 1988)

The perceived stress scale (PSS) is 14 14-item scale, the most extensively used instrument designed to measure the perception of stress. This scale measures the degree to which one's life can be stressful. The items of this scale were designed to tap into how individuals find their lives unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded. This scale measures the respondents' stressful life events from the past month. The scale entails a five-point Likert scale from 0 to 4, (Never) to (very often). The scoring is done by adding the scores of each items, and the higher the score, the more perceived stress. The scale has good psychometric properties. Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.89 (Lee, 2012; Walvekar, 2015).

2.6 Procedure

First of all, informed consent was given to the participants, and detailed information was provided about the research, including its rationale and purpose. After that, a demographic form was given to seek their personal information, including age, gender, university, and qualification and then questionnaires were filled out by the participants. The participants were instructed to ensure the research policy about confidentiality. All the participants were well educated, and they can easily understand the English terminology of the questionnaires. The participants were thanked a lot for their cooperation and their precious time.

3. Results

To analyze the results, a correlation coefficient was applied to see the relationship between perceived stress and satisfaction with life in university teachers, and a t-test was applied to see the difference between the male and female teachers' scores through SPSS vol.25.

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Swls-sum	12.6500	3.33815	200
PSS-sum	18.4100	5.17065	200

SWLS= satisfaction with life scale

PSS=Perceived Stress Scale

Table 1 shows the results of our study. It shows that the mean of satisfaction with life is 12.6500, its standard deviation is 3.33815, and the mean of perceived stress is 18.4100, and its standard deviation is 5.17065.

3.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Scales	M	SD	1	2
1. Perceived Stress Scale	12.6500	3.33815	1	-.777**
2. Satisfaction with Life	18.4100	5.17065		1

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

Table 2 shows a significant association between perceived stress and life satisfaction among university teachers. The correlation coefficient of perceived stress and satisfaction with life are significant even at the level of 0.01. Hence, the hypothesis, which states a significant association exists between perceived stress and life satisfaction among university teachers, is proved.

Table 3: Mean Difference between Male and Female Teachers

	N	Mean	St. Deviation	T	Sig.
Male	100	12.4700	2.79413	-.762	.256
Female	100	12.8300	3.81135	-.762	

3.3 Sample T-Test

Table 3 presents the mean scores and difference among male and female participants' scores on the satisfaction with life scale. The difference between the mean scores is found to be non-significant with the value of ($t = -.762$) and at the significance level of .256 ($p > 0.05$). The mean value of life satisfaction in Male teachers = 12.4700 and female teachers = 12.8300. Hence, the hypothesis is proved with the above results that there is a significant gender difference between males and females on the Satisfaction with Life Scale.

Table 4: Mean Difference between Male and Female Teachers on scores of Perceived Stress Scale

	N	Mean	St. Deviation	T	Sig.
Male	100	18.4600	4.18854	.136	.256
Female	100	18.3600	6.01601	.136	

Table 4 presents the mean scores and differences among male and female participants on the perceived stress scale. The difference between the mean scores is found to be non-significant with the value of ($t = .136$) and at the significance level of .256 ($p > 0.05$). The mean value of life satisfaction in Male teachers = 18.4600 and female

teachers = 18.3600.

3.4 Discussion

This research aimed to examine the association between perceived stress and satisfaction with life among university teachers during COVID-19. The outbreak of COVID-19 has been leading all over the world since 2020, and it is spreading quickly, and the death ratio has been increasing with every passing day. This pandemic has disturbed every aspect of life, due to which people feel helpless and hopeless. During the pandemic, people were afraid of this infectious disease because it affects not only affects their physical health but their psychological well-being as well. So, the current study aimed to see the level of stress combined with the level of satisfaction with life. The pandemic situation was different, and the government adopted various strategies, including lockdown, working from home, social distancing, and compliance with mask-wearing, as they were trying to stop the spread of this infectious disease. The government also decided to close the educational institutes to stop spreading the virus. These strategies impacted the mental health of the teachers and students to a greater extent. In order to see the impact of all these strategies, two variables were selected to examine the life satisfaction and perceived stress and relationship between them among university teachers during COVID-19. The covid-19 impacted and affected people from different domains. However, educational institutes are targeted among others, in educational institutes, teachers are mainly the population at high risk of developing mental health issues from the intermittent opening and closure of institutes and switching physical classes to online mode is again a new hurdle for them to deal with. This research aimed to cater for the question that how their stress level aggravated and its impact on their satisfaction with life.

The selected population was 200 participants aged 24 to 60 years (100 males and 100 females), selected through a random sampling technique. As the data was collected at the peak of COVID-19, the mode of data collection was in person and Google form through a self-report questionnaire. The data was collected from different universities in the province of Sindh. First, data was inserted into SPSS on the item level. Afterwards, it was analyzed. Three hypotheses were formulated prior to data collection. Each hypothesis was analyzed by measuring the correlation coefficient and t-test on SPSS vol. 25.

The first hypothesis implies that “there would be relationship between life satisfaction and perceived stress among university teachers during COVID-19.” The results show that the relationship was significant between both variables, perceived stress and satisfaction with life among university teachers. Hence, the hypothesis is proved. The prior studies also supported the study that is the distress of COVID-19 was found to increase anxiety and tension, as well as diminish the life satisfaction (Satici et al., 2020).

The second hypothesis was that “participants who scored low at perceived stress would score high on life satisfaction and vice versa. It was also significantly proved. Thus, the hypothesis is proved. Earlier studies also support this, suggesting that the crisis caused teachers to suffer from issues concerning the outbursts, like anxiety, depression, and stress, which limit their ability to work diligently. Eventually, they feel less satisfied with their lives (Al liliaceous Plant et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the third hypothesis states that “there is a significant gender difference in perceived stress and life satisfaction.” The results found a significant gender difference in PSS and SWLS. Hence, the hypothesis is proved. Previous studies also support these results, which suggested that during the pandemic, teachers suffered from anxiety, and there is also gender difference. Notably, it was observed that girls were more anxious than men, and additionally, they had more severe symptoms (Li et al., 2020).

It is essential to point out some limitations of the study. From the start, the study relied on data from self-reported questionnaires, which are prone to various biases. Stress and well-being are subjective phenomena that may be best assessed through self-reports. Second, the information was gathered via an online survey platform. Self-selection of

participants may have occurred due to the procedure of data collection and research promotion, particularly among older adult teachers who are less exposed to the Internet.

4. Conclusion

Our findings highlight the importance of perceived stress and life satisfaction in adversity among university teachers to have a positive outlook on life in hard times. It was observed that the university teachers experienced elevated stress levels during COVID-19, and they need support and guidelines to manage this adverse situation better. Providentially, the university management took excellent strategies and implemented them productively. Results suggested that there is no such difference in the gender but a little bit, which shows female teachers' are more stressed than males. It can be said that if teachers worry about their health, their stress levels may increase, which may cause decreased life satisfaction. It was also observed that teachers need more capabilities to cope with stress and anxiety related to Covid-19. Universities should implement intervention programs to prevent mental health problems during COVID-19 quarantine.

4.2 Recommendations

1. Just like health professionals, teachers should also be guided for COVID-19 and its impacts properly.
2. Teachers should be taught by psychologist the coping strategies to cope with the stress during COVID 19.
3. Teachers and other health professionals must strictly follow the SOPs.
4. They should get deep breathing and do not focus on false news.

4.3 Suggestions for Future Research

1. In future researchers should compare the stress coping strategies of COVID and NON-COVID patients
2. In future researchers can check the impact of COVID stress on educational achievements and teaching methodology of teachers
3. Researcher can also check the impact of COVID-19 on online learning.

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