RESEARCH ARTICLE

WELL-BEING AND LIFE SATISFACTION OF STUDENTS

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Abstract
Research into the quality of people's lives is a current issue addressed by a large number of researchers. Subjective measures indicate differences in real living conditions. The well-being of people is examined within the eudaimonic and hedonistic approach. As a part of the hedonistic approach, life satisfaction is largely examined. The hedonistic approach refers to social and psychological well-being. In this study, we investigated both approaches to examine the overall well-being of students. The participants' general satisfaction with life is very high. The survey of life satisfaction in certain domains shows that students are most satisfied in the domains of personal relationships, community and personal safety. The well-being of the participants is high. Participants exhibit high levels of emotional and psychological well-being, which are related to eudaimonia. Full-time students are more satisfied with life and have higher levels of subjective well-being than part-time students. No differences in eudaimonic well-being were found.

Introduction:
There is a lot of discussion about what makes a quality life. The quality of life refers to general well-being that includes objective factors and subjective evaluation of social and emotional well-being, personal development, and purposeful activity, all observed through an individual’s personal value system (Felce and Perry, 1993). It implies a complex process of evaluating life satisfaction within the environment in which an individual lives. The quality of life is related to hope for the future, income, employment opportunities, health, and family and social well-being (Melson, 1980). The quality of life is affected by various factors, such as the economic and social conditions in which we live, as well as the possibilities for development and autonomy. Objective factors are often examined, which makes it easier to compare the quality of life in different societies and periods. However, these measures do not reflect the experience of the quality of life (Campbell et al., 1976). As an indicator of the state of a certain society measures of subjective well-being is observed. In that sense, life satisfaction assessments are most commonly used.

People’s well-being is affected by emotions, life satisfaction, and relationships with other people (Diener and Seligman, 2004). Happiness is, according to some authors, related to current positive emotions. Happy people are more likely to experience positive emotions, positive experiences, and are more satisfied with life (Lykken and Tellegen, 1996). Subjective well-being represent s a general assessment of life. It includes positive and negative emotions, general life satisfaction, and satisfaction in certain areas of life (Diener et al., 1999). Life satisfaction is a
cognitive assessment of life as a whole. Some describe life satisfaction as the difference between aspirations and life achievements (Diener, 1984). People who exhibit high levels of subjective well-being experience positive emotions and pleasure, are satisfied with life, and rarely experience negative emotions. People against some standard of their own assess subjective well-being, and it represents a subjective experience (Diener et al., 1997). Most people are generally happy in different life domains, but they do not necessarily have to be happy. Happiness is one of the indicators of a society’s well-being (Diener, 2000). There are different ways to achieve happiness. One is a pleasant life, with as little pain and unpleasant experiences as possible, and it refers to hedonism originating from the ancient Greeks. According to them, enjoyment is the foundation of a fulfilled life. Another way of achieving happiness is through engaging in activities to which we are committed and in which we persevere (Park et al., 2009). Apart from that, happiness can also be achieved through a meaningful life. People who have meaning in life are more satisfied with it, more optimistic, have more self-esteem, and better psychophysical health.

In research on well-being, the authors have introduced various concepts, such as life satisfaction, self-esteem, and balance between positive and negative emotions (Bradburn, 1969). Psychological well-being refers to a wider range of well-being. Some call it happiness because there is no agreement on defining well-being (Ryff, 1989). Ryff (1995) proposed a model of psychological well-being consisting of six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, purpose in life, personal growth, and autonomy.

It is generally shown that demographic characteristics are poorly related to the level of happiness. However, they may reflect differences in objective living conditions. The study of the domains of life provides additional information on the structure of factors influencing well-being. The level of education is positively associated with happiness and life satisfaction (Ryff et al., 1999). Education provides more opportunities and more resources.

People’s experiences affect the experience of satisfaction and well-being. With social work students, the emphasis is to convey to them the ethical principles of social work and the basic needs of human rights during their studies. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the hedonistic and eudaimonic well-being of students. We want to investigate the level of quality of life, and different aspects of well-being in helping professions. Hence, we surveyed general satisfaction and satisfaction in different areas of life.

**Materials and Methods:-**

**Participants:**
Adults aged 19 to 50 years (mean age 22.75) participated in the study. Participants were mostly women (91.1%). In total, 35 full-time students (Mage = 19.89) and 21 part-time students (Mage = 27.52) of social work studies participated. The financial situation of students is mostly average (76.8%).

**Instruments:**

**Personal Well-being Index (PWI; Cummins et al., 2003; International Wellbeing group, 2013):**
The Personal Well-being Index consists of seven sections on which the participant assesses their satisfaction with their material condition, health, life achievements, relationships with family and friends, sense of physical security, acceptance from the environment, and future security. Life satisfaction is assessed on a scale of 11 degrees (0 – I am not satisfied at all to 10 – I am extremely satisfied). The result is expressed as an average number. The reliability index of Cronbach alpha is high, 0.80.

**The Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF; Keyes, 2005):**
The Mental Health Continuum consists of 14 items, which represent emotional (three items), social (five items), and psychological well-being (six items). Answers are given on a scale from 0 to 5 (0 – never, 5 – every day), thus measuring the frequency of experiencing mental health indicators. Reliability of Emotional and Psychological Well-Being subscale is high, and reliability for Social Well-Being subscale is acceptable.

**Sociodemographic Questionnaire:**
Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants (gender, age, material status, and information on their student status, that is, whether they are full-time or part-time students) were examined.

**Procedure:**
The aim of the research was explained to the participants, and it was emphasized that participation is anonymous, voluntary, and that they can ask for additional clarification or withdraw from participation at any time. They were
also told that the data obtained would be analysed at the group level and used exclusively for scientific purposes. Students completed the questionnaire independently via an online form. Completing the questionnaire took about 10 minutes. Participants completed the Personal Well-being Index, The Mental Health Continuum, and sociodemographic data.

**Results**:

Table 1 shows the descriptive results of the measured variables. Life satisfaction is rated very high (7.96). Participants exhibit a higher level of emotional well-being than psychological and social well-being.

Table 1: Descriptive data and coefficients of internal consistency of variables.

|                          | n  | Min | Max | M   | SD  | α    |
|--------------------------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Personal Well-being Index| 7  | 4.71| 10.00| 7.96| 1.08| .80  |
| Emotional Well-Being     | 3  | 2.67| 6.00 | 4.96| 0.74| .82  |
| Social Well-Being        | 5  | 2.20| 5.00 | 3.56| 0.76| .61  |
| Psychological Well-Being | 6  | 2.00| 5.83 | 4.62| 0.85| .84  |

Note. n – number of items; M – mean; SD – standard deviation; α – reliability coefficient Cronbach alpha

The mean values of the general quality of life and quality by domains are shown in Figure 1. The average of the general quality of life of students is 7.86. The lowest average value (6.82) was achieved in the domain of future security. The highest score (8.71) is achieved in the domain related to the general sense of security, followed by the domain of family relations (8.59). Participants are least satisfied with the domain of future security.

![Figure 1](image_url)

**Figure 1**: Mean values of the Personal Well-Being Index.
The mean values of the measured variables were calculated for full-time and part-time students separately. Examining the differences in the variables, it was found that full-time and part-time students differed significantly when it comes to emotional well-being (t(54) = 2.89, p < .05) and life satisfaction (t(54) = 2.54, p < .05). Full-time students are more satisfied with life and exhibit higher levels of emotional well-being than part-time students.

**Table 2:-** Well-being and life satisfaction of full-time and part-time students.

|                          | Full-time students | Part-time students |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                          | M  | SD | M   | SD |
| Personal Well-being Index| 8.16 | 0.86 | 7.13 | 1.31 |
| Emotional Well-Being     | 5.10 | 0.56 | 4.53 | 0.94 |
| Social Well-Being        | 3.61 | 0.76 | 3.48 | 0.76 |
| Psychological Well-Being  | 4.71 | 0.71 | 4.45 | 1.04 |

Note. M – Mean; SD – Standard deviation

**Discussion:-**

Compared to the theoretical averages of the examined (sub)scales, students have a high general quality of life. They are extremely satisfied with interpersonal relations. Family and friends play a great role in determining the quality of life. For young people, family and friends present a special source of security (Wenar and Kerg, 2000). Family relations are very important for assessing life satisfaction (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). The better the relationships people have with significant others, the greater their mental and physical health, as well as their satisfaction with life (Towler and Stuhlmacher, 2013). At different stages of life, we have different social functions with others. Research participants are at different stages of their development. Some are in the role of students and have not yet achieved independence. They have yet to accomplish their key life tasks (Berk, 2010). For them, relationships with peers and the realization of intimate relationships are more important. On the other hand, some of the participants are in middle adulthood. They have accomplished multiple development tasks, but relationships with their loved ones are also important to them. They have probably accepted their work and parenting roles and achieved independence. At this age, the relationship with one's own parents changes, which is characterized by less conflict and greater satisfaction with the relationship. Also, they are more focused on relationships with their partners, in which they achieve the greatest satisfaction in this domain (Baumeister and Leary, 1995).

Participants are extremely satisfied with the domain of community-connectedness. During the transition to adulthood, social relationships with other people bear great importance to young people (Lang, 2000). They spend a lot of time socializing and going out. In our society, the domain of community-connectedness is very much emphasized, although we are developing as an individualistic society. Young people develop social relations during their studies as well, which leads to an increase in their social network (Wandersman and Florin, 2000). Relationships with other people generally contribute to greater well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2008).

The domain of life achievements is a source of high satisfaction for the participants. Research participants are in the early and middle adulthood phases, which are characterized by personal development (Berk, 2010). Individuals in these life stages are focused on career development, marriage, and parenthood. They are open to new experiences and focused on achieving their goals. Education also plays a role in the individual's satisfaction when it comes to this particular domain. It allows for the acquisition of knowledge, new experiences, and skill development.

Well-being and health are no longer issues only for people in late adulthood. For the ageing process to run successfully, it is necessary to accomplish developmental tasks, and to retain the ability to take on different life roles (Clarke et al., 2001). Research participants are also in the adult stage, which is not characterized by major health difficulties. When considering this, it is understandable that participants are satisfied with their health.

Satisfaction in the domain of the standard of living is very high. One might expect that survey participants would exhibit lower satisfaction with the standard of living, since they live in a society where the differences in people's social standard are more pronounced. The standard of living and the quality of life are common indicators of well-being (Bérenger and Verdier-Chouchane, 2007). The standard of living usually includes the domains of education, health, and financial situation. Having analysed the domains mentioned, it can be said that students are very satisfied with their standard of living.
Participants are most satisfied with the domain of personal safety. This finding is somewhat surprising because the society in which we live is still in transition, and social inequality is still present. This result can be explained as a consequence of the post-war period, with participants assessing the current security situation as highly satisfactory. As expected, participants are satisfied with relations with other people, friends and family. On the other hand, they are the least satisfied with future security. However, during their development, these participants were exposed to uncertainties in society in general, such as poverty, and social and political changes. Therefore, this finding is quite understandable.

The obtained results indicating differences in life satisfaction and emotional well-being between full-time and part-time students exhibit that full-time students are more satisfied with life and have greater well-being. Students in general and full-time students in particular, have not achieved true independence. Their lives are still connected to their primary family, which fulfils their needs and provides support. Part-time students have most often accepted their social roles in society, become independent and pursue a career. Therefore, they are responsible for all aspects of their life and the decisions they make. In addition, apart from the developmental tasks they accomplish, they also study and take care of the financial aspects of life. This finding is expected. If we have fewer stressful situations and problems in life, we will have higher well-being and will generally be more satisfied. Such differences do not exist in the social and psychological well-being that constitute eudaimonic well-being. Some other factors may affect them, but the full-time/part-time student status is not one of them. In the future researches, it would be interesting to compare well-being of students of social and humanistic studies, with students of technical studies.

Conclusions:-

People's well-being is a complex phenomenon to explore. Participants express high general satisfaction with life. They are also very satisfied with certain areas of life. The greatest satisfaction comes from the domains of personal relationships, community, and personal safety. It is interesting that full-time students are generally more satisfied and have higher levels of subjective well-being, but not of eudaimonic well-being. Well-being is a multidimensional phenomenon that needs to be further studied in detail.

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