

Effect of Stress on Life Satisfaction amongst Working Adults

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Abstract

Over the past few decades, there has been a notable transformation in the workplace, with many employees experiencing heightened stress and pressure in response to the demands of today's professional environment. The study aims to investigate the impact of stress on the life satisfaction of working adults. The research involved a sample of 60 working adults aged between 26 and 45 representing various services and business organizations. The Satisfaction with Life Scale developed by Ed Diener, and the Perceived Stress Scale, created by Sheldon Cohen, were employed for data collection. Participants were asked to complete psychological measures through Google Forms. Data analysis included calculating means for both male and female participants and conducting correlation analyses to explore relationships between variables. The findings revealed a significant negative correlation between scores on the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Perceived Stress Scale ($r = -0.76$), indicating that the overall life satisfaction of working adults is adversely affected by stress. Additionally, it was observed that the mean life satisfaction score for females ($M=26$) was higher than that for males ($M=23$). Research findings can be used in the development of interventions and strategies within the workplace to alleviate stress and enhance life satisfaction by implementing stress management programs, wellness initiatives, or changes in organizational policies and practices.

Keywords: *Stress, Life Satisfaction, Working Adults*

Stress is a ubiquitous aspect of modern life, particularly among working adults who often face many responsibilities, deadlines, and challenges in their professional and personal lives. Stress encompasses various forms of disturbance that impose physical, emotional, or psychological burdens on individuals. At its minimal threshold, stress may not necessarily pose a threat to individuals; however, as it intensifies, it permeates every aspect of human behavior, including one's professional involvement. The impact of stress extends to diminishing the efficiency and productivity levels of employees, creating an environment where traditional stress-coping methods prove insufficient. In the face of overwhelming stress, individuals often find conventional approaches ineffective, prompting a search for solace in substances like medications or alcohol and, in severe instances, fostering the onset of psychological ailments. Stress, woven into the fabric of life, elicits both positive and negative consequences, with the latter often receiving heightened attention. Numerous external and internal obstacles disrupt the seamless progression of personal transformation, adding layers of complexity to the experience of navigating these challenges.

The impact of stress on physical and mental health has been extensively studied, but its relationship with life satisfaction remains a critical area of inquiry.

Stress

Stress, a common facet of contemporary living, arises when individuals confront challenges that surpass their perceived ability to cope. The body's instinctual "fight or flight" response triggers psychological changes, releasing stress hormones. While short-term stress can enhance performance, chronic stress may lead to health issues, including cardiovascular problems and mental health disorders. Sources of stress vary, spanning work-related pressures to personal and

societal expectations. Managing stress becomes imperative for well-being, involving strategies like mindfulness and social support to alleviate its adverse effects and foster resilience in navigating life's complexities.

Thorsteinsson, Brown, and Richards (2014) investigated the correlation between work stress and employees' health and work outcomes. The study revealed that elevated work stress was linked to unfavorable employee health and work-related results. Specifically, work stress played a contributory role in generating heightened perceived stress among certain workers, subsequently leading to compromised health conditions and an increased likelihood of turnover intentions.

In a separate study, by Celine (2018), it was discovered that participants experience a significant level of stress, detrimentally impacting their performance. Similarly, it was found that both work stress and the overall work environment exert a substantial influence on employee performance. (Sari et al. 2021)

According to Bui, Zackula, Dugan, and Ablah (2021), there was an inverse correlation between overall stress and productivity. The results indicated that higher Perceived Stress Scale scores were linked to lower scores on the Health and Work Questionnaire.

Life Satisfaction

Life Satisfaction, which refers to an individual's comprehensive evaluation of their own life and sense of happiness, holds a central position in shaping overall well-being. It encompasses personal experiences, relationships, achievements, and the fulfillment of one's goals and desires. This multifaceted concept goes beyond momentary happiness and delves into the broader and more enduring sense of well-being.

Life Satisfaction is often considered a valuable indicator of an individual's overall quality of life and

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serves as a metric for assessing the degree to which their aspirations, values, and expectations align with their lived experiences. Understanding a studying life satisfaction can offer insights into the factors that contribute to a fulfilling and meaningful life, influencing personal choices, societal well-being, and the formulation of policies aimed at enhancing the overall welfare of individuals and communities.

Aydintan & Koc (2016), in their study, found that there was a positive and significant correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Their findings highlight that a heightened level of job satisfaction corresponds to an elevated level of life satisfaction among teachers, underscoring the substantial impact that contentment in one's professional role can have on their overall well-being.

Moreover, individuals with elevated levels of life satisfaction encounter numerous outcomes in various facets of their lives, such as fostering healthier interpersonal and spousal relationships, as well as enjoying enhanced overall health (Ferguson, Carlson & Kacmar, 2015). Life satisfaction, characterized as a cognitive and evaluative process, involves a subjective and comprehensive assessment of an individual's overall life quality. (Szczygiel & Mikolajczak, 2017)

Stress and Life Satisfaction

Examining the impact of stress on the life satisfaction of working adults is essential not only for those individuals aspiring to enhance their quality of life but also for employers and policymakers with the goal of cultivating healthier and more productive work environments. Recognizing the intricate interplay between stress and life satisfaction not only empowers individuals to make informed choices for personal fulfillment but also equips organizations and policymakers with valuable insights to develop strategies that foster employee well-being and contribute to a more positive and thriving workplace culture.

Prior research, as highlighted by Abolghasemi and Varaniyab (2010), Cho and Kim (2014), and Yang and Kim (2016), has consistently indicated that perceived stress serves as a significant predictor of a diminished level of life satisfaction. Perceived stress, in this context, transcends the mere assessment of stressful life events; it involves evaluating the extent to which life situations are perceived as stressful, constituting the primary appraisal.

Bastug (2021), in his study, found a significant difference in the pretest-posttest values of life satisfaction and work stress among employees engaging in office exercise. The research revealed a notable decrease in work stress levels among those participating in office exercise, with female employees exhibiting lower levels of work stress compared to their male counterparts. The study also established a correlation between life satisfaction and work stress scores among workers. The overarching conclusion drawn from these findings is that an increase in the satisfaction of office workers corresponds to a

decrease in work stress levels.

Objective

To see the effect of stress on life satisfaction among working adults.

Hypotheses

There will be a statistically significant negative relationship between stress and life satisfaction among male employees.

There will be a statistically significant negative relationship between stress and life satisfaction among female employees.

Method

Sample

The research encompassed a diverse and representative sample comprising 60 working adults (30 Females and 30 Males) within the age range of 26 to 45 years. This cohort was carefully selected to mirror a broad spectrum of industries and backgrounds, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the study's subject. To ensure inclusivity and a varied representation, participants were recruited using Google Forms, a platform known for its accessibility and ability to reach a diverse audience. This recruitment method aimed to capture perspectives from individuals occupying various demographic groups and holding distinct job positions, thereby enriching the study with a multifaceted view of the impact of stress on life satisfaction among working adults.

Psychological Measures

Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1995):

Stress was measured by the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen et al., 1995). This is a 14-item instrument measuring the perception of stress. Participants are asked to select how frequently they experienced each item within the past month on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (very often). The Perceived Stress Scale has been widely used in research and clinical settings to assess stress levels and has demonstrated good reliability and validity. Researchers and healthcare professionals use the PSS to gain insights into an individual's subjective experience of stress, which can be valuable for understanding its impact on health and well-being.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985):

Life satisfaction was assessed by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). This scale is a 5-item self-report questionnaire that measures global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction. Items are scored on a 7-point Likert response format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Procedure

The study involved a systematic selection of subjects based on a predefined sample. Following the subjects' consent, the psychological measures were administered using Google Forms.

Results

Section A: Descriptive Statistics:

To investigate the study hypothesis, we computed the Mean scores of each variable of interest. The sample

comprised 60 adult employees, evenly distributed with 30 males and 30 females.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis-Mean for Stress and Life Satisfaction among Male and Female Working Adults:

Variable	N	Gender	M	M
Stress	30	Female	16	16.46
	30	Male	17	
Life Satisfaction	30	Female	26	24.25
	30	Male	23	

Table 1 provides a detailed analysis, presenting mean scores for stress and life satisfaction within the demographic categories of male and female working adults. In terms of the stress variable, there is minimal disparity between the mean score for females (M=16) and males (M=17), indicating a nearly equal level of perceived stress among both genders. Notably, males exhibit a slightly higher stress score than females.

Turning to the variable of life satisfaction, the mean score for females (M=26) exceeds that of males (M=23) by a slight margin. This suggests a slightly higher overall life satisfaction among female working adults compared to their male counterparts. The nuanced differences in mean scores between genders provide insights into potential variations in stress and life satisfaction levels within the studied population.

Section B:

This section presents the outcomes depicting the interplay between variables. Statistical analysis employed Pearson's Product Moment Method Correlation Coefficient was used for the statistical analysis.

Table 2: Correlation coefficients

Variables	Gender	r
Stress and Life Satisfaction	Female	-0.79
Stress and Life Satisfaction	Male	-0.99
Stress and Life Satisfaction	Overall	-0.76

Table 2 shows a strong negative correlation between stress and life satisfaction among males ($r = -0.99$) compared to females ($r = -0.79$).

Discussion

In the contemporary world, the intricate relationship between stress and life satisfaction has become a focal point of exploration, given the dynamic demanding nature of today's professional landscape. The relentless pace, heightened competition, and the evolving nature of work contribute to elevated stress levels experienced by many working individuals. As the demands of the modern workplace intensify, the impact of stress on overall life satisfaction becomes

increasingly pronounced. The constant juggling of professional responsibilities, coupled with the intricate balancing act between work and personal life, underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of how stress influences the broader well-being of working adults.

The study utilized the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) as a tool to assess stress levels, aiming to delve into the subjective experiences of individuals and gain valuable insights into the intricate impact of stress on health and overall well-being. With a maximum score of 40 on the PSS, the scale offered a comprehensive evaluation of participants' perceived stress levels. Additionally, the Satisfaction with Life Scale was employed to measure the global cognitive judgments individuals make regarding their life satisfaction, with the highest achievable score being 35. This dual-measure approach allowed for a multifaceted examination of both stress and life satisfaction.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to scrutinize the relationship between stress and life satisfaction variables across genders. This statistical method facilitated a comprehensive analysis of the extent and direction of the association between stress and life satisfaction among male and female participants.

The mean scores revealed a subtle disparity in stress levels between genders. Specifically, the mean stress score for males (M=17) was slightly higher than that for females (M=16), indicating a marginal difference in perceived stress. This nuanced gender-specific variation in stress levels lays the groundwork for a more detailed exploration of how stress influences overall life satisfaction among male and female participants. This finding aligns with earlier studies (Padkapayeva, Gilbert, Bielecky, Ibrahim, Mustar, Brisson, & Smith, 2018, Stafyla, Kaltsidou & Spyridis, 2013).

The mean score of life satisfaction among females, denoted by M=26 surpasses that of males, represented by M=23. This noteworthy difference aligns harmoniously with the conclusions drawn in prior studies, as illustrated by Ray (2022). Ray's research provides support for the observed disparity in life satisfaction scores between genders. Women may be more successful in achieving a satisfying balance between work and personal life, which is often associated with higher life satisfaction. Flexible work arrangements and changing societal expectations may contribute to this balance. Women may derive a sense of fulfillment from their work, particularly if they feel that their contributions are meaningful and aligned with personal values. Additionally, there is support for these findings in various earlier studies. These research endeavors have reported similar trends, indicating that working females tend to exhibit higher life satisfaction compared to their male counterparts (Becchetti & Conzo, 2021.)

The Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficients for stress and life satisfaction demonstrate noteworthy

gender differences. Specifically, among females, the correlation coefficient is -0.79, while among males, it is a more negative value of -0.99. This indicates that the relationship between stress and life satisfaction is less strongly negative for females compared to males. The findings affirm our hypotheses, indicating a negative correlation between stress and life satisfaction among male and female working adults. A correlation coefficient of -0.99 suggests a very strong and nearly perfect negative linear relationship between stress and life satisfaction. This means that as stress levels increase among males, there is a highly pronounced and consistent decrease in life satisfaction. As for females, a correlation coefficient of -0.79 also indicates a negative linear relationship between stress and life satisfaction, but the strength of this relationship is slightly less intense compared to males. While there is still a clear negative association, the decrease in life satisfaction with increasing stress is not as extreme as it is for males.

The overall correlation coefficient between stress and life satisfaction is -0.76, indicating a moderate to strong negative linear relationship between these two variables. This means that as stress increases, there is a significant tendency for life satisfaction to decrease. The magnitude of -0.76 suggests a substantial degree of consistency in the negative association across the entire sample or population under study. However, it's important to note that while correlation coefficients quantify the strength and direction of the relationship, they do not imply causation and other factors may contribute to the observed patterns in stress and life satisfaction. These findings align with and reinforce the conclusions drawn in earlier studies conducted (Pasupuleti, 2009, Mutiu, 2014, Bastug, 2021, & Rajasekhar, 2021)

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Conclusion

In conclusion, this study delves into the intricate relationship between stress and life satisfaction, particularly within the context of the contemporary professional landscape. The research reveals nuanced gender-specific variations in stress levels, with a marginal difference favoring females. Notably, females demonstrate higher life satisfaction, aligning with previous research, and suggesting that factors such as work-life balance and fulfillment in work contribute to this trend. Overall, there is a strong negative relationship between stress and life satisfaction, with gender differences in the intensity of this association. While females exhibit a slightly less intense negative correlation compared to males, both genders show a substantial decrease in life satisfaction with increasing stress. These findings reinforce prior studies and emphasize the need for a comprehensive understanding of how stress impacts overall well-being in both male and female working adults.

Limitations and Implications

The study's limitations include potential issues with generalizability due to specific sample reliance on self-report measures susceptible to participant bias, a cross-sectional design limiting causal inference, and oversight of cultural variations.

The implications suggest a need for further exploration of subtle gender-based stress differences, advocating for gender-specific interventions to enhance life satisfaction, emphasizing workplace strategies for stress management, and promoting longitudinal research to understand the dynamic nature of stress and life satisfaction. Additionally, caution is advised in interpreting correlation coefficients, emphasizing the importance of exploring additional factors for a comprehensive understanding.

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