

Psychological Flexibility and its Relationship to Life Satisfaction among University Students: A Field Study on Clinical Psychology Master's Students at Ghardaia University

Hanane Belabbes

University of Ghardaia , faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Belabbes.psycho@Yahoo.fr

Received:15/02/2022 Accepted:14/05/2022 Published: 14/12/2022

Abstract:

The Following Study Aims To Reveal The Relationship Between Psychological Resilience And Life Satisfaction Among University Students. For This Purpose, The Descriptive Approach Was Adopted, And The Two Scales Of Psychological Resilience And Life Satisfaction Were Used, Which Were Applied To A Sample Of 45 Students. After Processing The Data Statistically, We Reached A Set Of Results, The Most Important Of Which Are:

- There Is A Statistically Significant Relationship Between Psychological Resilience And Life Satisfaction Among Clinical Psychology Master's Students.
- There Are No Differences In The Level Of Psychological Flexibility And In The Level Of Life Satisfaction Due To The Gender Variable.

Keywords: Positive Psychology, Psychological Flexibility, Life Satisfaction Clinical Psychology, University Education.

1.Introduction :

Psychological resilience is one of the main components that complement mental health and reflects a person's ability to resist stress. It is defined as the ability to not have mental illness despite stressful conditions. In his definition of psychological resilience, Rutter indicates that it would bring about psychological and social balance in a person, as it is: "The positive pole of the unique phenomenon of individual personal differences in people's responses to stress and adversity (Rutter, 1990, p316)

Perhaps, the difference between flexibility and other psychological variables is that flexibility does not allow the individual to overcome stress only, but it can provide them with the skill to deal with it and benefit from it and consider it a challenge worth facing (Nill, 2006).

The researcher believes that individuals who have an appropriate degree of flexibility have the ability to achieve effective communication, which contributes to their psychological health and enables them to achieve the highest levels of life satisfaction. The latter is satisfaction with life, the way people express their feelings and how they feel about their orientation and choices for the future.

The feeling of satisfaction with life becomes extremely important in one of the most important and basic stages of an individual's life, which is the university stage as it determines the shape of his/her future life. In order for students to successfully overcome this stage, they must exert effort and perseverance, bear the study burdens and university requirements, in addition to the ability to face the pressures and difficulties of daily life. All of this requires having a degree of flexibility on the part of the university student to get through this stage peacefully and live in good mental health. During our contact with the students, we did not find this. Rather, most students face various difficulties, some of which are related to adapting to the university environment, including those related to the lack of psychological flexibility in interaction with colleagues, professors, and the university environment as a whole, which prevents them from enjoying their university life and being satisfied with it. Hence, This study is an attempt to identify the relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction among university

students, especially master students, specializing in Clinical Psychology, University of Ghardaia.

2. Determining the problematic:

Life is characterized by many severe experiences and situations that may constitute tension and pressure on people's psyche and will, which leads them to search for a way to agree with it with all that they do. For example, when circumstances change within the family or social relations are affected and economic means deteriorate, life becomes complicated, which affects the individual's psyche. In light of these fluctuations, the reaction of individuals will be different in order to adapt to the new situation, and as far as the psychological flexibility of individuals, their responses and adaptation to the situation will be effective. In light of these fluctuations, individuals react differently in adapting to the new situation, and their responses and adaptation to it depend on the amount of psychological flexibility they have. Hussein Shahata (2003) defines flexibility as "the ability or skill to generate diverse ideas or new solutions that are not routine. It also means directing or transforming the course of thinking in response to an exciting change or the requirements of the situation. It is the opposite of mental inertia, which means adopting predetermined thought patterns that are not easily changeable according to the need or the development of the problem, and it is one of the creative thinking skills." Thus, psychological resilience in psychology, according to Abu Halawa, "refers to the idea of the individual's tendency to persistence and maintain his calm and self-balance when exposed to pressures or stressful situations, as well as one's ability to effectively adapt and positively confront these pressures and those traumatic situations" (Shehata, 2003, p. 268).

Flexible university students are the ones who have the speed to adapt and integrate with emergency situations and who enjoy safety and psychological well-being. We find them optimistic about life and able to think creatively and adapt to new data and situations. Hence, psychological resilience helps individuals to resist and recover from harsh life events and to be satisfied with their life, thus, psychological resilience is linked to life satisfaction. The latter is one of the indicators of happiness and mental health. Crystal.L (2003) defined it as "life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole. In other words, how much a person likes the life s/he lives." (Crystal.L, Park. 2003, p25).

In addition, the role of life satisfaction is not limited to making individuals feel happy and enjoy life, but it also has a positive effect on the physical health of individuals as it gives them good health and prevents the emergence of psychosomatic disorders.

Therefore, life satisfaction is the individual's enthusiasm for life and the desire for it and the real desire to live it. This includes a number of qualities, the most important of which are resentment, optimism, anticipation of good, self-satisfaction, acceptance and respect.

Accordingly, life satisfaction is the "acceptance of the achievements s/he has achieved in his/her past and present life, and this acceptance is reflected in the individual's compatibility with himself and others and his/her optimistic view of life and the future" (Shaqoura, 2013, p. 13). The university stage is considered one of the critical stages in an individual's life, as it determines the nature and quality of his/her future life. In order for students to get through this stage successfully, they must exert efforts and perseverance, bear the burdens of study and the requirements of university life in general, in addition to facing the other pressures of life. For this reason, they must have a high degree of satisfaction with university life and all that is associated with it, such as satisfaction with specialization and satisfaction with performance. All of these tasks and challenges require that they have the ability to adapt, adapt and face the challenges of the university environment in order to pass this stage peacefully. Accordingly, the problematic of the current study can be concerned with identifying the nature of the relationship between psychological flexibility and life satisfaction among students of clinical psychology. To verify this, we formulated the following hypotheses:

- There is a statistically significant relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction among master's students in Clinical Psychology at the University of Ghardaia.
- There are differences in the level of psychological resilience attributed to the gender variable.
- There are differences in the level of life satisfaction attributed to the gender variable.

3. Study significance:

- This study is of theoretical and applied value, and adds something new to the scientific and academic process in the field of clinical psychology, as we have recorded the scarcity of previous

studies in the local environment concerned with the study of these two variables among university students.

- This topic is considered one of the positive psychology topics that is relatively new and of interest to researchers and scholars, and this opens a door to research in it and to enrich information about it.

- This study may benefit researchers and practitioners interested in preparing programs to raise the level of psychological resilience and quality of life among students. Revealing the variables that are related to, affect and affected by psychological resilience is important when preparing and planning treatment, counseling or training programs.

4. Objectives of the study:

- Identifying the relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction among master's students in clinical psychology.
- Identifying the differences in the level of psychological resilience and life satisfaction according to the gender variable among the study sample members.

5. Defining concepts

The following is a brief definition of the study concepts from the theoretical and operational point of view.

5.1. Psychological Resilience

Conceptual:

Resilience comes from the Latin term *salire*, which means to spring, and from *resilire*, which means spring back. As for the English origin of the word Resilience, it is derived from the English word (softness, strength of resistance) and it means the ability of a person or social system to deal successfully with stressful life circumstances and the negative consequences of stress (Wiseman, 2005).

The term resilience is also used to distinguish individuals with the ability to overcome setbacks related to their lives and future aspirations (Shield, De vruis, 2005).

Connor and Davidson define psychological resilience as: "the ability to recover or return to normal after exposure to a stressful event" (Connor, Davidson, 2005, p660).

The American Psychological Association defined it as: "The process of adaptation to face adversity, trauma, tragedies, threats, or even important sources of stress, such as family and social problems, serious health problems, or financial and workplace pressures. It means returning to normal from difficult experiences" (Comas, 2004, p1). Moreover, The American Psychological Association also

mentioned that there are factors associated with psychological resilience such as making flexible plans, self-confidence, positive self-image, communication skills, and the ability to manage feelings and impulses (APA, 2010).

Richardson (2002) also identified aspects of psychological resilience represented in:

A-Traits of resilience: It is a set of psychological characteristics that characterize individuals who have psychological resilience.

B- Resilience processes: The way with which a person copes with traumatic events and difficult life circumstances.

C - Innate resilience: It is the motive factors that may affect a person's response to life's stresses and difficult circumstances.

As for Ungar (2008), he argues that psychological resilience is a psychological formation that exceeds the ability of individuals to confront or positively agree with difficulties and traumatic events. Psychological flexibility is an opportunity and ability for individuals to positively employ psychological, social, physical and cultural resources. This is for the sake of confrontation and effective positive compatibility with stresses and traumatic life events while maintaining calm and psychological balance and speed of recovery from the negative effects of these pressures and traumatic events and quickly return to a sense of the quality of self-existence or what is correct to be called self regulation.

Through the above, it can be said that the flexible university student is the one who has the ability to adapt to stressful situations and emerging circumstances while maintaining his/her emotional balance.

Operational: It is the ability to adapt and accept reality as it is. This is the most important characteristic that distinguishes a resilient person and varies according to individual differences, and it is the degree obtained in the Psychological Resilience Scale developed by Shaqoura in 2012.

5.2. Satisfaction with life:

Conceptual:

Seligman (2002) believes that life satisfaction goes beyond just enjoying pleasant activities, it is also related to those activities or behaviors that arise from strength, or those that bring satisfaction or gratification.

As for Canda (2003), he believes that life satisfaction is the self-parting of the quality of life, where the individual feels satisfied with his/her functions, circumstances and existence.

Pavet and Diener (1993) defined life satisfaction as how individuals judge and evaluate their lives from their own point of view, and this evaluation has two aspects. The first: cognitive and is represented by individuals' perception and evaluation of life in general, or evaluation of specific aspects of life such as life satisfaction, marital satisfaction or job satisfaction. The second is people's assessment of their lives based on the repetition of pleasant or unpleasant events that cause either happiness and joy, or stress, anxiety and depression, and thus a feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in its various degrees.

Operational:

It is an assessment of the individual's life as a whole and the inner feeling of happiness in life and accepting it as it is, and it is the degree obtained in the life satisfaction scale designed by **El-Desouki** in 1998.

5.3. Concepts related to life satisfaction:

1. Happiness: Scientists distinguish between life satisfaction and happiness, as happiness means an emotional state, while life satisfaction is a process that includes issuing a cognitive judgment. Happiness has two components: the emotional component, which is represented in the feelings of joy, pleasure, and enjoyment. Secondly, the cognitive component, which is represented in life satisfaction, and it is considered as the individuals' mental assessment of their satisfaction, reconciliation and success in the various areas of his life: achievement, self-realization, relationships, health.

2- Acceptance of life: is a general and comprehensive concept, and it includes the individuals' ability to adapt and come to terms with themselves and with others around them (Shaqoura, 2012, p. 31).

3- Quality of life: it means enjoying the material conditions in the external environment, feeling good, satisfying needs, and being satisfied with life. This is in addition to individuals' awareness of the strengths and contents of their life and their sense of the meaning of life, in addition to positive physical health and their sense of happiness, leading to a harmonious and compatible life between the essence of man and the prevailing values in his society. Thus, life satisfaction is a general assessment of the life quality of an individual according to criteria one chooses.

5.4. Satisfaction with university life:

The stage of university life is the beginning of the real life of young people, in which the students' academic personality is formed,

as they are separated from their childish behavior and move to conform to the requirements of university life. The university environment is the basis that forms the feelings of the university student towards the educational process, where life satisfaction helps students in managing their time and feel appreciated by others.

The students' feeling of satisfaction and mental health and their ability to satisfy their needs comes through the advancement provided by the university environment in the services it provides to them in all of its academic, health, psychological and social fields, with their good management of time and benefit from it.

Methodological procedures for the study

1. Methodology:

The descriptive analytical approach is adopted in this study as it studies the phenomenon as it exists in reality, describes it accurately, collects information and data about it, classifies, organizes and expresses it quantitatively and qualitatively. This leads to an understanding of the relationships between the variables, so we adopted it in order to reveal the relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction among the study sample (Obaidat et al., 2007, p. 276).

2. Study population:

The following study's research sample includes (68) male and female students, majoring in clinical psychology, at the master's level at the University of Ghardaia, including (50) female students and (18) male students, for the 2019/2020 academic year.

Table No. (1): The distribution of the study population

Gender Level	Male	Female	Total
1Master	7	23	30
Master 2	11	27	38
Total	18	50	68

From the table, it is clear that the study population is estimated at 68 students, represented by 18 male and 50 female students. The number of Master 1 students is estimated at 30, while the number of Master 2 students is estimated at 38.

3. Description of the study sample:

The study sample is purposely selected, and the questionnaire was distributed to the research group consisting of 68 students, where only

45 questionnaires were answered, consisting of (34 female and 11 male), including 22 from Master 1 class and 23 from Master 2 class. The following is an explanation of how the sample members are distributed according to the study variables

Table No. (2) The distribution of the basic study sample members according to the gender variable

Gender	Number	Percentages
Male	11	24.55%
Female	34	75.55%
Total	45	100%

Source : Prepared by the researcher

From the table it is clear that the number of male students is 11 (24.44%), while the number of female students was 34 (75.55%).

Table No. (3) The distribution of the basic study sample members according to the university level variable

Level	Number	Percentages
Master1	22	48.88%
Master2	23	51.11%
Total	45	100%

Source : Prepared by the researcher

From the table, it is clear that the number of Master 1 students is estimated at 22 students (48.88%), while the number of Master 2 students is estimated at 23 students (51.11%).

4. Study tools:

4.1. Psychological resilience questionnaire: Developed by researcher Yahya Shaqoura in 2012. It consists of '40' items distributed over three dimensions:

- Emotional dimension: 16 items
- Mental dimension: 9 items
- Social dimension: 15 items

It has a gradual scale with three options: always (3 degrees), sometimes (two degrees) and never (one degree) and vice versa for negative items.

4.2. The Life Satisfaction Questionnaire: prepared by Magdy Al-Souqi in 1998. The questionnaire consists of 30 items distributed over six dimensions:

- Happiness Dimension: 7 items
- Social dimension: 5 items
- Reassurance dimension: 6 items
- Psychological stability dimension: 3 items

- Social appreciation dimension: 6 items
- Contentment Dimension: 3 items.

It also has 5 options distributed as follows:

Perfectly applicable (5 degrees), fairly applicable (4 degrees), Somewhat true (3 degrees), not applicable (2 degrees), absolutely not applicable (1 degrees).

5. Statistical methods:

Several statistical methods are used in the current study, which are:

- Pearson correlation coefficient to test the relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction.
- Mann Whitney test.
- Guttman Split-Half Coefficient.
- Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient in order to check the internal consistency of the questionnaire scores.
- "Shapiro-Wilk" test to test the normal distribution of data for the scores of the two scales.
- Using SPSS25 to process data statistically.

6. Presentation, analysis and interpretation of results

1- Presentation and interpretation of the first hypothesis's results:

The first hypothesis states that **“there is a statistically significant relationship between the degrees of psychological resilience and life satisfaction among master’s students in Clinical Psychology at the University of Ghardaia.”**

The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient test between psychological resilience and life satisfaction among master's students in Clinical Psychology at the University of Ghardaia are estimated at (0.334) at the level of significance (sig), which is estimated at (0.025), which is less than (0.05). This indicates that it is statistically significant. Thus, we accept the alternative hypothesis that states: There is a correlation between psychological resilience and life satisfaction among master’s students in Clinical Psychology at the University of Ghardaia.

Accordingly, the hypothesis has been validated, and thus, we can explain this correlation with the fact that the Master students of Clinical Psychology at the University of Ghardaia have benefited somewhat from the scientific material presented to them. In addition, providing them with the best training helped them gain psychological flexibility, their satisfaction with life and their acceptance of it, and this would raise the degree of self-confidence and their self-esteem, as it was clearly reflected in the obtained results.

This agrees with the results of many academic studies, such as the Shaqoura study (2012) on psychological resilience and its relationship to life satisfaction among Palestinian university students in Gaza governorates. The results of the study indicate a positive correlation between psychological resilience and life satisfaction. (Shaqoura, 2012, p. 92).

2. Presentation and interpretation of the second hypothesis results:

The hypothesis states that **"there are differences in the level of psychological resilience attributed to the gender variable."** The hypothesis was proved to be false which means that there are no differences in the level of psychological resilience due to the gender variable among the study sample. This explains that both sexes have reconciliation with themselves along with some psychological balance and that urban development has contributed to limiting the so-called male dominance and the emergence of the so-called equality.

The results of our study agrees with many scientific studies on the subject, including the study of Rabia Manea (2013) on the level of psychological resilience among middle school students and its relationship to gender and specialization. its results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between the gender in the level of psychological resilience (Rabia, 2013, p.397).

This is in addition to Neamat's study (2018) on psychological resilience and its relationship to moral thinking among a sample of university students. The study concluded that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the sample on the psychological resilience scale due to the gender variable (Neamat, 2018, p. 704).

As well as Suraa's study (2016) on cognitive failure and its relationship to psychological resilience among university students. The results show that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological resilience according to the gender variable (Suraa, 2016, p. 490).

However, our study does not agree with the study of Al-Khatib (2007) on evaluating the self resilience factors of Palestinian youth in the face of traumatic events. The results show that there are statistically significant differences in the flexibility of the self due to the gender variable, and the differences were in favor of males. (Al-Khatib, 2007, p. 1080)

3- Presentation and interpretation of the third hypothesis results:

The hypothesis states that “**there are differences in the level of life satisfaction attributed to the gender variable.**” The results indicate that there are no differences in the level of psychological resilience attributed to the gender variable among the study sample. This result can be attributed to the fact that the conditions of students from both genders are similar and that they are satisfied with their achievement and academic performance along with possessing the morale, in preparation for facing life's problems.

Our results agree with Ahmed's study (2015) on life satisfaction and its relationship to self-esteem among students of the Faculty of Education - University of Damascus. The results show that there are no statistically significant differences between the average degrees of life satisfaction for males and females (Ahmed, 2015, p. 78).

Nevertheless, the results of our study do not agree with Souad's study (2019) on the meaning of life and its relationship to some dimensions of positive thinking in the light of life satisfaction among university students in the State of Kuwait. The results show that there are differences between males and females in terms of life satisfaction only (Souad, 2019, p. 353)

Conclusion:

In this research paper, we have tried to examine the relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction on a sample of Master's students in Clinical Psychology at the University of Ghardaia. The study reached a set of results, the most important of which are:

- There is a statistically significant relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction among master's students in clinical psychology.

Based on the results of the current study, the following recommendations can be made:

- Conducting more studies that link psychological resilience and quality of life to some other variables among university students from other disciplines.
- Building a counseling program to raise the level of psychological resilience among university students
- Holding seminars to raise awareness of the importance of enjoying the quality of life, especially within the university community,

through achieving psychological flexibility and its effect on educational attainment.

- Designing training programs to increase psychological flexibility and life satisfaction among students, as they are the elite of society, through seminars and study days held periodically.

References

- Al-Khatib, Muhammad Jawad Muhammad. (2017). Evaluating the Ego Resilience Factors of Palestinian Youth in the Face of Traumatic Events (in arabic). Al-Azhar University - Gaza, Islamic University Journal, 15.(2)
- Hussein Ali Zainab, Ali Sultan Zahraa. (2018). Life Satisfaction among Students of the College of Dentistry (in arabic). Bachelor's Degree, University of Al-Qadisiyah.
- Mustafa, Fahmy. (1978). Psychological adjustment. Egypt: Dar Misr for printing.
- Neamat, Ahmed Qassem.(2018). Psychological flexibility and its relationship to moral thinking among a sample of university students (in arabic). Educational Journal, (54).
- Rabia Manea Zeidan. (2013). The level of psychological resilience among middle school students and its relationship to gender (in arabic). Tikrit University Journal for Human Sciences, 20(6)
- Rutter, M. (1985). Developing concepts in developmental. Ln J.J Hudziad (ed.), developmental Psychology and wellness: Genetic and environmental influences.
- Shaqoura, Yahya Omar Shaaban. (2012). Psychological flexibility and its relationship to life satisfaction among students of the Gaza Provinces College (in arabic). Master's thesis in Psychology - Al-Azhar University, Gaza.
- Shehata Hussein, Zainab Najjar. (2003). A Dictionary of Educational and Psychological Terms (in arabic), translated by Hamed Ammar. The Egyptian Lebanese House, 1st Ed, Cairo.
- Suraa Asaad Jamil, Wafaa Kanaan Khader. (2016). Cognitive failure and its relationship to psychological resilience among university students (in arabic). Tikrit University, Psychological Research Center.(26) ,
- . Seligman , M.(2002). Authentic happiness : using the new positive Psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment , New York , Free Press
- American Psychological Association, (APA) (2010).The road to Resilience, 750, First Street, NE, Washington DC.
- Comas – Diazm L. & Luthar, S.S. & Maddi, R.S. & O Neill, H.K. & Saakviten, K.W. & Tedeschi, G.R. (2004). The Road To Resilience, The American Psychological Association: APA Help Center

- Connor, K.M & Davidson, J.R.T (2005). Trauma, Resilience And Salionstasis: Effects of Treatment in Post – Treatment Stress Disorder. *Interational Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 20, 43-48.
- Crystal.L,Park(2003) ,The psychology of religion and positive psychology.American psychological.
- De Vries, H., & Shields, M. (2005). Entrepreneurial resilience: An analysis of the resilience factors in SME owner-managers. A working paper, Retrieved July.
- Richardson, G. E., Neiger, B.L., Jensen, S., & Kumpfer, K.L.(1990). The resilience model. *Health Education*,21, 33-39.
- Rutter, M. (1990). Psychological resilience and protective mechanisms. In J, Rolf, Risk and protective factors in the development of psychopathology, Cambridge universi Shatkin
- Wiseman, A. W. (2005). *Principals under pressure: The growing crisis*. Lanham, MD; Scarecrow Education.