

# Life Satisfaction in Adolescents with the Effects of Perceived Stress in Students of Selected Schools of Dharan Municipality

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Received: 09/12/2016

Revised: 19/12/2016

Accepted: 26/12/2016

## ABSTRACT

**Background & Objectives:** To safeguard adolescent mental well-being, it is important to create social environments that offer protective factors for mental health and limit exposure to risk factors for mental disorders. Objectives of the study were to assess the life satisfaction among adolescents and to find out the association between the life satisfaction, perceived stress and the selected socio-demographic variables.

**Methods & Materials:** A descriptive, cross sectional study design was used. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the schools and systematic sampling technique for selection of students. Sample size was 160 students who fulfilled the selection criteria. Data were collected by self administered method using Scott Heubner's Multidimensional students Life satisfaction scale (MSLSS) and Cohen's Perceived stress scale.

**Results:** Majority 67.5% of the respondent were from the age group above 15 years. In case of residence majority 84.4% of them were from urban. Maximum 96.2% were belonging to Hindu religion. In matter of occupation of parents, maximum 32.5% were doing business as their source of income likewise as of mother, 73.6 % were housewives. Total 160 students were satisfied with their lives. The association with the perceived stress and the selected socio-demographic variable was found to be significant only with the education of mother ( $p=.023$ ). The correlation between perceived stress and life satisfaction showed negative relationship, ' $r$ '= -0.33 at  $p<0.01$ .

**Conclusion:** Therefore it can be concluded that good communication and living environment is the contributing factor for life satisfaction among adolescents.

**Keywords:** Perceived stress, Life satisfaction, Adolescents.

## INTRODUCTION

Life satisfaction concept has for long been a subject of philosophical speculations. Its wider application has recently been achieved by growing interest in positive psychology. This concept is well understood through positive interest in all the activities and that person he/she will be more satisfied then actually achieving the goals. It can be

defined as a cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole and/or of specific life domains. <sup>[1]</sup> Adolescence is an exciting and dynamic period for young people." Adolescents" refers to individuals between the ages of 10-19 years and the term "youth" refers to individuals between the ages of 15-24 years, while "young people" covers the entire age range, from ages 10-24 years

(WHO). [2] As adolescents are faced with changes in their bodies and cognitive development they are constantly renegotiating their relationships with family, friends, school, and community. [3]

The WHO reports that most adolescents are in fact satisfied with their lives, perceive their health to be good and do not regularly suffer from health complaints such as headaches, irritability or feeling low. To safeguard adolescent mental well-being, it is important to create social environments that offer protective factors for mental health and limit exposure to risk factors for mental disorders. Good relationships in the home, school and neighborhoods play a part in ensuring that young people can develop social competence and contribute to cohesive societies. Social approaches are essential in promoting the satisfaction of young people and supporting the reduction of inequities in adolescence. [4]

Schools today are positioned as key to achieving both the educational attainment and the wellbeing. It has focused on the involvement in meaningful roles at school, maintaining safety at the school campus, opportunities for creative engagement, and opportunities for academic engagement. Along with these achievements adolescents have to keep up with add on roles in the family and his/ her neighbors. They experience stress when they fail to achieve with the good outcome. Sometimes group of students are vulnerable to having strained peer relationships and poor classroom participation

Adolescence is also described as a time of “storm and stress” in which rapid changes in physical and emotional development inevitably lead to conflicts between adolescents and authority figures. [5]

As they navigate the critical tasks of self-identity development and graduated autonomy adolescents are at risk for the development of harmful behaviors. **Problems behavior in the form of substance use and adolescents misconduct**

Drug injecting among adolescents and young people is a growing concern in Nepal as well. Half of the country’s 50,000 people injecting drugs were between the ages 16 and 25 years. Over one-eighth of the male injecting drug users in Kathmandu (14.3%) and Pokhara (13%), and one-tenth (11%) in Eastern Terai were found to be adolescents in an in-depth study about injecting practices and sexual behavior. UNICEF 2001 survey reported that more than one in 10 teenagers admitted to taking drugs. Of these, 56% took drugs by smoking, 26% by inhaling and 5% by the injecting route. [2]

After understanding the adolescent’s life changes with the stressors and the problems faced throughout the phases of students level of satisfaction. The researchers focused on differential and interactive influences of individual, family and environmental variables on adolescent perceived stress. This study is aimed to determine to what extent certain objective indicators of quality of life, aspects of social relationships and personal variables predict adolescent life satisfaction as well as to examine to what extent quality of relationships with significant others (parents and peers) and personal resources (self-esteem) are achieved.

#### **Objectives of the study were**

1. To assess the life satisfaction among adolescents.
2. To find out the association between the life satisfaction and the selected socio-demographic variables.
3. To find out the association between perceived stress and the selected socio-demographic variables.
4. To find out the relationship between life satisfaction and perceived stress among adolescents.

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted. Adolescents who were between the age group of 13-19 years of age (n=160) were selected from both Government and Private schools.

Simple random sampling for schools selection was adopted. From the base sample (170), 160 students were selected by systematic sampling technique, who accepted the invitation after fulfilling the eligibility criteria written consent was obtained; all participants completed the Cohen's perceived stress scale and Scott Heubner's Multidimensional Student's Life satisfaction Scale.

Cohen's perceived stress scale is a 10 items with 4 point Likert scale (0=never, 1= almost never, 2=sometimes, 3=fairly often and 4=very often). The questions in the PSS ask about the feelings and thoughts during the last month. The items are easy to understand and the response alternatives are simple to grasp.

Scott Heubner's Multidimensional students Life satisfaction scale (MSLSS) is a 40 items with 4 point Likert scale (never=1); (sometimes = 2); (often = 3); and (almost always = 4). MSLSS was designed to (a) provide a profile of children's satisfaction with important, specific domains (e.g., school, family, friends) in their lives; (b) assess their general overall life satisfaction; (c) demonstrate acceptable psychometric properties (e.g., acceptable subscale reliability); (d) reveal a replicable factor structure indicating the meaningfulness of the five dimensions; and (e) be used effectively with children across a wide range of age (grades3-12) and ability levels (e.g., children with mild developmental disabilities through gifted children). Higher scores thus indicate higher levels of life satisfaction throughout the scale.

These tools are standardized tools where the reliability of Heubner's Life Satisfaction Scale ranges from.70s to low. 90s

### Statistical analysis

After all the responses had been recorded, the data were coded and entered in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 for further analysis. Statistical analysis was then done by means

of chi-square test for the categorical variables. Correlation analysis was then carried out to determine significant correlation between stress and life satisfaction.

## RESULTS

In regard to socio-demographic profile from total 160 adolescent students, 87.5% were less than 15 years. Regarding the gender 50% equal representation from both. In case of residence maximum 84.4% were from urban area. To know about the religion 96.2% were from Hindu religion. In case of family type 65% were from single family type.

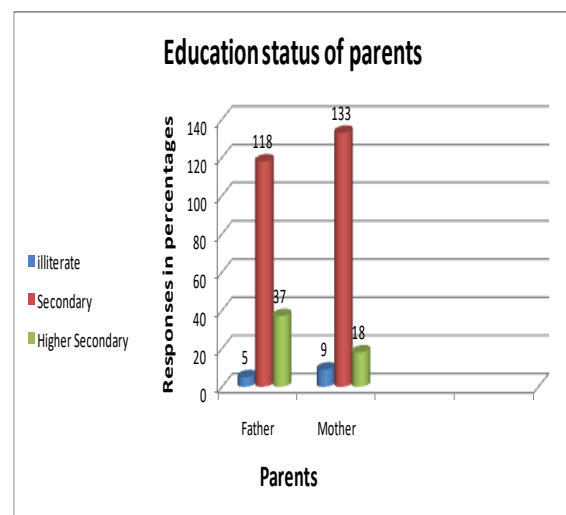


Figure1: Education status of parents

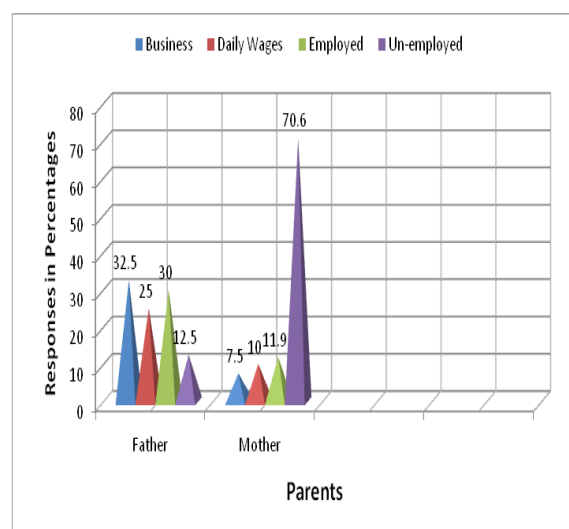


Figure 2: Occupation Status of parents

**Table 1: Frequency and percentages of perceived stress Scale n= 160**

S.No	Perceived Stress Scale	Never		Almost Never		Sometimes		Fairly often		Very often	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something had happened unexpectedly?	23	14.4	11	6.9	103	64.4	14	8.8	9	5.6
2	In the last month, how often have you felt that you are unable to control the important things in your life?	33	20.6	26	16.3	49	30.6	32	20.0	20	12.5
3	In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?	15	9.4	24	15	85	53.1	23	14.4	13	8.1
4	In the last month, how often have you felt confident in your ability to handle your personal problems?	7	4.4	17	10.6	41	25.6	51	31.9	44	27.5
5	In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	20	12.5	18	11.3	66	41.3	35	21.9	21	13.1
6	In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with the things you had to do?	17	10.6	26	16.3	78	48.8	22	13.8	17	10.6
7	In the last month, how often have you been able to control the irritations in your life?	11	6.9	21	13.1	53	33.1	45	28.1	30	18.8
8	In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	55	34.4	28	17.5	44	27.5	25	15.6	8	5.0
9	In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	20	12.5	24	15	72	45	28	17.5	16	10
10	In the last month, how often have you felt that difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	40	25	39	24.4	44	27.5	24	15	13	8.1

**Table 2: Frequency and percentages of Multidimensional Students life Satisfaction Scale n=160**

S.N	Items	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<b>Family</b>									
1	I enjoy being at home with my family	1	0.6	18	11.3	26	16.3	115	71.9
2	My family gets along well together	3	1.9	19	11.9	46	28.8	92	57.5
3	I like spending time with my parents	3	1.9	28	17.5	28	17.5	101	63.1
4	My parents and I doing fun things together	8	5.0	63	39.4	45	28.1	44	27.5
5	My family is better than most	3	1.9	22	13.8	43	26.9	92	57.5
6	Members of my family talk nicely to one another	3	1.9	20	12.5	35	21.9	102	63.8
7	My parents treat me fairly	19	11.9	23	14.4	24	15	94	58.8
<b>Friends</b>									
8	My friends treat me well	3	1.9	16	10.0	53	33.1	88	55
9	My friends are nice tome	3	1.9	10	6.3	47	29.4	100	62.5
10	I wish I had different friends	32	20	58	36.3	21	13.1	49	30.6
11	My friends are mean to me	54	33.8	42	26.3	34	21.3	30	18.8
12	My friends are great	9	5.6	39	24.4	51	31.9	61	38.1
13	I have bad times with my friends	90	56.3	52	32.5	10	6.3	8	5.6
14	I have a lot of fun with my friends	2	1.3	30	18.8	50	31.3	78	48.8
15	I have enough friends	5	3.1	21	13.1	56	35	78	48.8
16	My friends will help me if I need it	4	2.5	30	18.8	45	28.1	81	50.6
<b>Schools</b>									
17	I look forward to going to school	1	0.6	10	6.3	45	28.1	104	65
18	I like being in school	2	1.3	21	13.1	46	28.8	91	56.9
19	School is interesting	3	1.9	29	18.1	50	31.3	78	48.8
20	I wish I didn't have to go to school	91	56.9	49	30.6	16	10	4	2.5
21	There are many things about school I don't like	52	32.5	69	43.1	21	13.1	18	11.3
22	I enjoy school activities	6	3.8	19	11.9	50	31.3	85	53.1
23	I learn a lot at school	4	2.5	10	6.3	33	20.6	113	70.6
24	I feel bad at school	96	60	50	31.3	9	5.6	5	3.1
<b>Living environment</b>									
25	I like where I live	7	4.4	16	10	30	18.8	107	66.9
26	I wish there were different people in my neighbourhood	41	25.6	41	25.6	35	21.9	43	26.9
27	I wish I lived in a different house	104	65	25	15.6	15	9.4	16	10
28	I wish I lived somewhere else	81	50.6	40	25	17	10.6	22	13.8
29	I like my neighbourhood	16	10	31	19.4	42	26.3	71	44.4
30	I like my neighbors	11	6.9	32	20	62	38.8	55	34.4
31	This town is filled with mean people	38	23.8	46	28.8	47	29.4	29	18.1
32	My family's house is nice	3	1.9	12	7.5	36	22.5	109	68.1
33	There are lots of fun things to do where I live	14	8.8	28	17.5	45	28.1	73	45.6
<b>Self</b>									
34	I think I am good looking	37	23.1	63	39.4	32	20	28	17.5
35	I am fun to be around	9	5.6	50	31.3	47	29.4	54	33.8
36	I am a nice person	13	8.1	57	35.6	38	23.8	52	32.5
37	Most people like me	7	4.4	43	26.9	73	45.6	37	23.1
38	There are lots of things I can do well	6	3.8	30	18.8	63	39.4	61	38.1
39	I like to try new things	3	1.9	10	6.3	25	15.6	122	76.3
40	I like myself	15	9.4	37	23.1	29	18.1	79	49.4

In case of association, there was significant association found only between perceived stress and the education qualification of parents 'p' value= 0.023. While in-case of association between life satisfaction and selected variables there was no significant association found with any of the variables.

Table 3: Correlation between perceived stress and life satisfaction

Variables	Mean ± SD	'r' value	'p' value
Perceived stress	18.63± 5.08	-0.33	<0.001
Life satisfaction	127.29± 12.56		

The above table depicted highly significant relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction, showing negative relationship when stress increases life satisfaction decreases.

## DISCUSSIONS

Life satisfaction is a cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole and/or of specific life domains. Measures of life satisfaction can be broadly understood by internal qualities of self-esteem, sense of control, being happy and extraversion to a variety of interpersonal variables that include measures of quality of children's relationships with parents as well as with non-family relations that provide emotional support, such as experiences in school and with peers. [1]

The first objective of the study was to assess the life satisfaction among student. The result showed 100 percent satisfaction of life. This findings is supported by the study done by Sukkyoung You at.al on Relation among school connectedness, Hope, life satisfaction among adolescence where the findings showed higher life satisfaction among students who were able to more readily envision multiple pathways to desired goals, had the self-beliefs and interests needed to move toward their goals.

In regard with the second objective, association between perceived stress and the mother's educational status at the level of  $\leq 0.05$  p= 0.023. The finding is supported by the study done on Adolescents academic achievement and life satisfaction: the role of

parent education Results indicated that only mothers' education functioned as a moderator of the relationship between academic achievement and students' life satisfaction. [6]

The interesting result about this study is that both genders, male and female equally are satisfied with life. The result is contradicting with the research done on gender and age differences in life satisfaction within sex segregated society. Results revealed a significant difference between males and females. [7]

## CONCLUSION

Hence it can be concluded that there are numerous benefits for adolescents with high life satisfaction such as physical and mental health and good interpersonal relationships. In fact life satisfaction functions as a buffer against the impact of stressful life events on developing psychopathology.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to acknowledge B.P. Koirala Health Sciences and Psychiatric Nursing department for providing me such opportunity to conduct a research and making it a successful one.

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How to cite this article: Pradhan N, Lama S, Pandey A. Life satisfaction in adolescents with the effects of perceived stress in students of selected schools of Dharan municipality. Int J Health Sci Res. 2017; 7(1):202-207.

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