



Life Events Stress and Life Satisfaction: An Analysis of The Relationship With Reference To Different Types of Events

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ABSTRACT

The study examines relationship between life events stress and life satisfaction and effects of different types of life events on life satisfaction. Sample consists of 200 men and women, ages 35-45 years, selected from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Data is collected using two scales, Presumptive stressful life events scale and Life satisfaction scale. And data analysis is done using correlation and multivariate regression analysis. Results show no correlation between life events stress and life satisfaction. But when bifurcated; personal and undesirable life events stress have negative effects on life satisfaction whereas desirable events have positive effects on life satisfaction. The study is important as it tracks life satisfaction changes in response to types of life events.

KEYWORDS

Dysplasia, Pap test, Papanicolaou stain, cervical cancer, ASCUS, CIN.

Life events are defined as any set of circumstances, the advent of which signify or require change in the individual's ongoing life pattern (Holmes and Rahe, 1967). They are situations to which everyone is exposed in the natural course of life such as giving birth, marriage, divorce, death of spouse, loss of job, etc. (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend 1974). For long researchers have been trying to establish connection between life events stress and subsequent illness, physical as well as psychological (Holmes and Rahe, 1967; Schmale and Engel, 1972).

Life satisfaction is a part of broader concept called Quality of life and Subjective well-being (SWB). Life satisfaction is defined as an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. It is one of three major indicators of well-being: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Diener, 2004). Our main aim in conducting this study is to relate the objective factors of life, which is life events, with subjective feelings, that is life satisfaction.

Many studies show relationship between Life events and Life satisfaction. Findings indicate that a wide variety of events, including employment related events, residential moves, and household related changes, are associated with negative changes in psychological well-being (Mc Lanahan & Sorensen, 1984). Similarly self-reports of negative life changes are related to overall decrease in life satisfaction, controlling for health status, and personal disruption (Martinson, Wilkening and Linn, 1974).

Effects of events on psychological status is largely decided by the nature of event and context in which they occur (Mc Lanahan & Sorensen, 1984). Negative events are more likely than positive events to provoke enduring changes in mood or life satisfaction (Fujita & Diener, 2005). That is, prolonged unemployment (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2004), an enduring disability (Lucas 2007), can compromise wellbeing over an extensive period of time. Yet, positive events, such as increases in income, do not seem to promote wellbeing as sustainably (e.g., Lykken & Tellegen, 1996). Also effects of events on SWB, and are not based on desirability or undesirability of events (Luhmann, Maike; Hofmann, Wilhelm; Eid, Michael; Lucas, Richard E., 2012).

The effects of Life events on Life satisfaction is time bound. For instance Set point theory of SWB suggest that SWB levels fluctuate around a biologically determined set point that rarely changes (Fujita & Diener, 2005). After individuals experience positive events, their wellbeing might rise transiently but then

will revert to original set point.

Likewise, after individuals experience negative events, their wellbeing might decline momentarily, but then returns to the previous level. In fact study depicts that only those life events which have occurred during the previous 3 months influenced life satisfaction and positive and negative affect (Suh, Eunkook; Diener, Ed; Fujita, Frank, 1996). The Dynamic Equilibrium model (DE) and Homeostasis principle also advocate the Set point theory (Heady and Wearing, 2008).

In contrast, evidence from large-scale studies of German panel data propose that some events leave lasting effects on life satisfaction while some do not. The study showed complete adaptation to divorce, widowhood, and layoff. However there is no adaptation to unemployment for men (Clark et al, 2006). This indicates that both the genders might show different patterns in life satisfaction changes as a result of life events.

Women report more changes in life satisfaction in response to life events (Lieberman, 1978). This is also true in case of elderly women; they are more responsive and vulnerable to life changes than men (West & Simons, 1983) In general, men are more affected by unemployment and layoffs, a confidant illness than are women (Clark et al, 2008) but that women were more negatively affected by stressful life events that occurred to people who were close to them. (Kessler et al.,1987).

In existence of this literature it is clear that no studies have been conducted to relate types of events with life satisfaction. Current study tries to establish this association in detail. Moreover time lapse between event and life satisfaction measurement and gender being mediating variables special attention is given to control their effects on the results.

Method Hypotheses

There is no correlation between Life events stress and life satisfaction.

The life events stress of desirable, undesirable, personal, im-personal and ambiguous events has no effects on life satisfaction.

Tools

Presumptive stressful life events scale by Dr Singh, Kaur and Kaur. It is a 51 items checklist to measure life events stress. The test has further divided these items into 5 categories.

ries that is desirable, undesirable, personal, impersonal and ambiguous. Every event has been given a score from 1-100; depending upon the level of stress they create. Its Test-Retest reliability is 0.73.

Life satisfaction scale by Dr. Singh and Joseph has been used to measure life satisfaction. It covers 35 items scale with responses being made on 5-point scale. Its test retest reliability is 0.91 and validity is 0.83.

Procedure

For the present study a sample of 200 subjects (100 men and women each) were selected through convenience sampling method. The sample aged between 35 - 45 years and belonged to middle class (income between 40,000 to 80,000 a month). The subjects belong to Ahmedabad city and surrounding areas of Gujarat.

The sample was asked to fill demographical data sheet and then both the tests were given one after another. PSLES calculates the overall life stress for the events that have occurred in past 1 year so the time lapse between event and life satisfaction measures was 1 year. The test also bifurcates events in five categories namely desirable undesirable personal, impersonal and ambiguous. For statistical analysis Pearson correlation method and Multivariate regression analysis was used. The data analysis was done using SPSS.

The multivariate regression analysis model -:

$$LS = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{ Ambiguous} + \beta_2 \text{ Desirable} + \beta_3 \text{ Impersonal} + \beta_4 \text{ Personal} + \beta_5 \text{ Undesirable} + u_i$$

$$LS = 128.91 + 0.03 \text{ Ambiguous} + 0.09 \text{ Desirable} + 0.01 \text{ Impersonal} - 0.02 \text{ Personal} - 0.08 \text{ Undesirable} + u_i$$

Results and Discussions

The study found no significant correlation between Life events stress and life satisfaction. These findings are justified as overall Life events comprise of many types and thus may or may not generate stress consequently might not add or reduce life satisfaction.

Variables	Values	Life events stress	Life satisfaction
Life events stress	Pearson Correlation	1	.018
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.800
	N	200	200
Life satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.018	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.800	
	N	200	200

Multivariate analysis shows that ambiguous and impersonal life events stress have no significant effects on changes in life satisfaction. Desirable life events stress has positive effect on life satisfaction and it is significant at 0.01 level. Undesirable life events stress has negative effects on life satisfaction which is significant at 0.01 level. And personal life events stress, though nominal, has negative effects on life satisfaction which is significant at 0.1 level.

Table 2 Multivariate regression analysis results for types of life events and life satisfaction

Variable	Coefficient	t-Statistic	Prob.	R-Suared	Adjusted R-Squared	F-Statistics
C	128.91	29.15531	0	0.549234	0.537616	47.27567
AMBIGUOUS	0.03	1.39731	0.1639			
DESIRABLE	0.08	5.771124	0			
IMPERSONAL	0.01	0.798238	0.4257			
PERSONAL	-0.02	-1.678314	0.0949			
UNDESIRABLE	-0.08	-10.11414	0			

Conclusions

Thus it can be concluded that life events stress affects changes in life satisfaction but this relationship relies on the nature and type of event. The changes are maximum in case of desirable and undesirable events which contradicts results of Luhmann et. al. in 2012. Also effects of life changes on life satisfaction can be observed, beyond 3 months (Suh, Eunkook; Diener, Ed; Fujita, Frank, 1996), up to 1 year.

However further studies are recommended as some variables mediating relationship between life events stress and life satisfaction have not been included in this study to limit its scope. For example individual differences in personality traits (Steel, Schmidt and Schultz, 2008), social support, and other coping resources might influence changes in life satisfaction. Other limitation of this study is that, it limits itself to the life events mentioned in the PSLES checklist and stress generated by other events is excluded.

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