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QUALITY OF LIFE (QoL) IN UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Quality of Life (QoL) of university students remains an under studied topic that can raise problematic situations if not addressed properly. Many university students are immersed in an environment of high levels of stress due to academic workload and responsibility. The main objective of the study is to investigate the Quality of Life among Sri Lankan undergraduates using a cross-sectional analysis, among a sample of 165 undergraduates. The study analyzed the Quality of Life of state and non-state university undergraduates via four domains: Physical Health, Psychological Health, Social Relationships, and environmental Health. Data collection was done primarily through WHOQOL-BREF scale. The regression analysis test was used to analyze the relationship between the domains. Results indicate that the higher level of QoL reported by female undergraduates, out of the four domains that were investigated in the study and overall undergraduate's psychological health seems to be better than other studied domains. When comparing the two university categories, the highest level of QoL was reported from non-state universities. Thus, it is evident that QoL serves as a powerful mediator in the relationship between the academic and social life of undergraduates in Sri Lanka. Eventually this research paper contributes to the literature pertaining to QoL of undergraduates where policies and implications are required to sustain their future.

Key Words: Undergraduates, Quality of Life, WHOQOL-BREF

1. Introduction

The mental state and health are important things in a person's life that they have to make sure that they have all of it in their life. Since the sudden improvement and demand from society and the expected parties, the struggle that an average student has to go through has been enormous and unexpected. Because of these reasons, the undergraduates have to work more and be restless. They have become more work-oriented and spend more time working with the academic and academic-related activities rather than having some time to calm them down, collect the day's thoughts on the matters, and start the day fresh in the coming morning.

Education is the key to moving within the globe, seeking higher jobs, and achieving life. Moreover, training is a Great Investment for human beings because properly knowledgeable people have extra opportunities to get a task which gives them Pride. Moreover, they can correctly contribute to the development of their country and society by inventing new devices and discoveries. But almost all over the world, there are many problems related to the poor QoL of students. problems with students' poor QoL include depression, poor interpersonal relationships, and low self-esteem. These psychological issues cause considerable controversy in students' achievements, performance, and enhanced productivity. Also, there is a huge gap in Sri Lanka with research related to this contemporary issue. Past literature indicates there were a limited number of studies in the Sri Lanka context determining the factors influencing QoL of university students in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine QoL among undergraduates in Sri Lanka which has never been studied previously in local context.

2. Literature Review

Expertise economic system calls for establishments with the ability to discover new knowledge, broaden modern applications of these discoveries and transfer them into the marketplace through entrepreneurial sports. Expertise accumulation is an increasing number at the core of a country's aggressive benefit in Sri Lanka, and the increasing problem has been expressed approximately the first-class of a college education over the last decades. The quality assurance agency council of the university grants fee, Sri Lanka (QAAC) was established in 2007 to study programs of taking a look at presented through numerous departments of examine (concern opinions) and the first-rate of higher training establishments (institutional evaluations). Evaluation of the difficulty evaluates reports imply that, on the whole, the departments in universities have completed satisfactorily, obtaining excellent grades for half the publications and first-class grades for 41% of courses (Gunawardena, 2017).

The study conducted by Malkoç, (2011) on QoL and subjective well-being in undergraduate students examined whether the QoL and physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and the environment domains make significant predictions about subjective well-being. The QoL was assessed according to gender, socio-economic status and no of siblings, living environment, parents' education level. Their sample consisted of 271 Istanbul undergraduates between the ages of 17 and 29, including 205 females and 66 males. The Subjective Well-Being Scale (SWBS) and WHOQOL-BREF was used to collect data. SWBS consists of 46 items graded on a 5-point Likert scale starting

from disagreeing to agree fully. High scores indicate high subjective well-being. The WHOQOL-BREF contains 26 items and can measure Physical Health, Psychological Health, Social Relationships and Environment. The researchers used stepwise regression analysis, T-test, and One Way ANOVA for data analysis. Findings show that general health and QoL affect subjective well-being. In addition, with the help of the socio-economic level, a significant demographic factor for the QoL of the research sample was found.

Zhang et al., (2012) conducted a study on the QoL of medical students in China. The purpose of this study was to assess the QoL of students education and to examine factors affecting students' QoL. Stress, poor living environments and learning terms & conditions of Chinese medical students adversely affect QoL lifestyle. WHOQOL-BREF and SF-36 were used for QoL of medical students. Students were selected by cluster sampling method.

A detailed study by Suleiman et al., (2013), examined the QoL among university students in Jordan. Data were collected from 119 full-time Jordanian undergraduates. The Arabic version of the SF-36 was used to measure QoL. The Arabic version of the SF-36 was used to measure QoL. The authors used version 18 of the SPSS for data analysis and have identified that Arab women get a better QoL experience than women in Western culture.

As per the literature, the well-being and quality of Life among the university undergraduates in Sri Lanka is a well-required function and appreciation. The authorities that follow and mandate such conditions should be well appraised so that the Quality of Life is a far more critical and influential thing among the students.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of The Study

This study is explanatory research, where the study population comprises of state and non-state university undergraduates across the country. As there was no research done using both undergraduates, QoL may vary from state to non-state universities and from one province to another. Data collection was mainly conducted via predefined online questionnaires as the pandemic has not allowed universities to function as usual. However, as the data collection was conducted via social media platforms, it helped the researchers evade the country's current pandemic situation.

3.2 Sample of The Study

The study population was reported 129,833. The sample of the study was made up of 165 respondents obtained via snowball sampling.

3.3 Instrument of The Study

A 26-item questionnaire titled WHOQOL-BREF introduced by *WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION*, (1996) was used to measure the Quality of Life of the Sri Lankan undergraduates. WHOQOL-BREF consists of two general questions regarding the overall quality of life and physical health. The other 24 items are to validate the Quality of Life under four domains named as "Physical Health", "Psychological Health", "Social Relationships" and "Environmental Health". According to the given guidelines, raw domain scores derived from the study were transformed into a 0-100 scale. Based on the

results, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to be 0.908 which indicates overall validity of the study is 90.8%.

The Author, through this chapter, will be focusing on developing a conceptual framework that supports identifying the insightful relationship among the selected variables.

The researcher begins the study with an open mind, focusing on acquiring the most accurate and reliable data, from which conclusions will be drawn. A positive approach is most suited to guarantee the collection of the most relevant data.

4. Results / Analysis & Discussion

4.1 Demographic Data Analysis

Table 1: Study population characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender – Male	83	50.30%
Female	82	49.70%
Age – Below 20	02	1.20%
20 - 25	119	72.10%
26 - 30	43	26.10%
Above 30	01	0.60%
Civil Status – Single	161	97.60%
Married	04	2.40%
Uni. Category – State University	98	59.40%
Non-State University	64	40.60%
Academic Year – Y 01	13	7.90%
Y 02	26	15.80%
Y 03	45	27.30%
Y 04	81	49.10%
Accommodations – Hostel	36	21.80%
Own Home	103	62.40%
Boarding House	17	10.30%
Relative's place	06	3.60%

In the total sample of 165 students, 50.30% of the respondents were male, and 49.70% were female. In addition, the majority of the respondents were between 20-25 years old, and a minority of the respondents were above 30 years old.

4.2 Domain Scores

Table 2: WHOQOL-BREF mean scores and standard deviation scores in four domains

Domain Scores	Physical Health Mean \pm SD	Psychological Health Mean \pm SD	Social Relationships Mean \pm SD	Environmental Health Mean \pm SD	Total Mean \pm SD
Gender – Male Female	49.23 \pm 16.79	58.63 \pm 20.46	53.31 \pm 26.15	56.44 \pm 20.89	54.40 \pm 19.14
	51.44 \pm 13.92	60.57 \pm 16.37	60.77 \pm 22.47	59.45 \pm 17.65	58.06 \pm 15.52
Age – Below 20 20 - 25 26 - 30 Above 30	42.86 \pm 15.15	47.92 \pm 8.83	75.00 \pm 11.78	56.25 \pm 8.83	55.51 \pm 0.84
	50.60 \pm 13.81	60.08 \pm 18.05	56.72 \pm 23.40	58.53 \pm 18.31	56.49 \pm 16.36
	50.17 \pm 19.54	59.21 \pm 20.13	57.56 \pm 28.16	56.69 \pm 22.59	55.90 \pm 20.82
	39.29 \pm 0	41.67 \pm 0	33.33 \pm 0	43.75 \pm 0	39.51 \pm 0
Civil Status – Single Married	50.35 \pm 15.24	59.81 \pm 18.40	56.99 \pm 24.49	57.98 \pm 19.23	56.28 \pm 17.35
	49.11 \pm 24.97	51.04 \pm 23.90	58.33 \pm 33.33	56.25 \pm 26.88	53.68 \pm 25.11
Uni. Category – State Uni. Non-State Uni.	49.82 \pm 14.75	58.76 \pm 17.64	56.12 \pm 23.88	57.59 \pm 18.08	55.57 \pm 16.73
	51.07 \pm 16.46	60.82 \pm 19.78	58.33 \pm 25.74	58.44 \pm 21.18	57.17 \pm 18.61
Academic Year – Y 01 Y 02 Y 03 Y 04	53.02 \pm 18.31	60.90 \pm 21.88	60.90 \pm 28.74	61.54 \pm 22.44	59.09 \pm 20.80
	44.37 \pm 16.96	53.21 \pm 17.76	47.12 \pm 23.44	53.00 \pm 16.61	49.42 \pm 16.14
	52.78 \pm 15.67	61.48 \pm 21.17	57.41 \pm 26.30	59.38 \pm 23.27	57.76 \pm 20.27
	50.44 \pm 14.02	60.39 \pm 16.40	59.36 \pm 22.91	58.14 \pm 17.22	57.08 \pm 15.34
Accommodations – Hostel Own Home Boarding House Relative's place Other	45.73 \pm 14.50	56.13 \pm 16.32	49.31 \pm 20.92	52.86 \pm 18.66	51.01 \pm 15.27
	51.28 \pm 15.65	60.80 \pm 19.50	59.06 \pm 24.53	59.28 \pm 19.57	57.61 \pm 17.88
	56.30 \pm 13.57	63.73 \pm 16.78	65.69 \pm 27.62	62.13 \pm 19.05	61.96 \pm 17.65
	51.19 \pm 17.44	55.56 \pm 16.38	55.56 \pm 25.09	61.98 \pm 14.03	56.07 \pm 13.55
	50.32 \pm 15.43	59.60 \pm 18.51	57.02 \pm 24.60	57.94 \pm 19.34	56.22 \pm 17.48

As per the given table, the researchers found out that the Female undergraduates enjoy a better quality of life compared to male undergraduates, with their score being greater than the male respondent's quality of life score. Both Female and male undergraduates are more worried about Physical Health.

Undergraduates between 20-25 had the best overall QoL scores, followed by the 26-30 age category. Though the other two categories had lesser QoL scores, the researchers

could not make a fair comparison as they received only mere responses in those two categories.

Single undergraduates showed a better overall score of 56.28. Though the Undergraduates who are married had a lower overall QoL score, only four responses were received in this regard. Single ones are more worried about their Physical Health compared to other domains.

Non-State University undergraduates also recorded improved scores in every domain, indicating better quality of life measures. But both State and Non-State university students had lower scores in Physical Health and Social Relationships domains compared to the other two domains.

Among the sample studied of the university undergraduates, first year, third year, and Fourth year students had higher QoL scores compared to the Second Year students with a comparatively lower overall score of 49.42. However, they Scored less values in every four domains tested out in the questionnaire.

As per the studied sample, undergraduates who stayed at boarding houses revealed better QoL scores compared to the other Accommodation categories, followed by students who remain at their own homes. Their scores were high in all domain categories studied under WHOQOL-BREF. On the other hand, the ones who stay at hostels had poor overall QoL standards compared to the rest.

The Psychological Domain had the highest mean score (59.60), followed by Environment Domain (57.94), Social Relationship domain (57.02), and Physical Health domain (50.32).

The overall quality of life rating remained at 3.65 (on a scale of 1-5), while the satisfaction level with the health of undergraduates was slightly lower (3.62).

By referring to the studies done by Bastaminia et al., (2016) regarding QoL, Physical Health had the highest scores, and environmental health had the lowest scores, which does not comply with the studies done by the research, with the highest being the Psychological domain and lowest being the physical health domain.

Table 3: Scores received on all questions in each WHOQOL-BREF domains

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Psychological	165	8	100	59.60	18.511
Environment	165	0	100	57.94	19.349
Social Relationship	165	0	100	57.02	24.607
Physical Health	165	0	89	50.32	15.431
The overall quality of life (Q1)	165	1	5	3.65	0.874
Satisfaction with health (Q2)	165	1	5	3.62	0.906

Recently, Burdurlu et al., (2020) addressed QOL among Dental students of a private University in Turkey. They reported that psychological health has the lowest and physical

health has the highest score. According to a study at Sarawak University in Malaysia, students perceived their psychological health as the lowest and social relationship as the highest domain of their QoL (Cheah & Law, 2021).

4.3 Regression Analysis

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.744 ^a	.553	.542	.55390

a. Predictors: (Constant), Environment, Social Relationships, Psychological, Physical Health

Based on the above table results, the R-Square value is 0.553, which indicates that 55.3% of the total variation of Quality of Life can be explained by all independent variables. Other portion of the variance of Quality of Life has been explained by other influencing factors which are not considered in this study.

From the table below, the p-value 0.000 less than 0.05 indicates a relationship between Quality of Life and independent variables at a 5% significance level.

Table 05: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	60.705	4	15.176	49.466	.000 ^b
	Residual	49.089	160	.307		
	Total	109.794	164			

a. Dependent Variable: Quality of Life

b. Predictors: (Constant), Environment, Social Relationships, Psychological, Physical Health

Table 06: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.733	.226		3.239	.001
	Physical Health	.062	.124	.047	0.503	.616
	Psychological	.510	.103	.462	4.948	.000
	Social Relationships	.025	.070	.034	.395	.693
	Environment	.271	.106	.257	2.558	.011

a. Dependent Variable: Quality of Life

As shown in the above table, Psychological and Environment domains are found to have a statistically significant relationship with Quality of Life with the p-values less than 0.05. On the other hand, physical health and social relationships are not significant, with the p-values greater than 0.05 significance level.

5. Conclusion

The collected data in the current study indicate that the scores of undergraduate students' QOL were scattered around the center of the scale, and Psychological and Environmental domains have a statistically significant relationship with Quality of Life of the Undergraduates. We can conclude that the quality of life has a much larger and important role in the life of university undergrads and the people that are involved in the cases where the users and the people of the universities should make sure that there are more time and space for the undergraduates to grow and have the time, they have among the studies to be more efficient and productive.

For the betterment of the industry and the people involved in this, there should be a better study and a place to increase the efficiency in the university streams, both public and private. So that future researchers can develop a method to calculate and find out what is the best way to stimulate the stress and the other factors, try to get them under control because then they can manipulate the relationship between the quality of life and the other variables that can affect the dependent variable. So that can be a good factor and a stream that this research can develop.

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ANNEXTURES**World Health Organization Quality of Life Scale**

		Very Poor	Poor	Neither poor nor good	Good	Very Good
01.	How would you rate your quality of life?	1	2	3	4	5

		Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
02.	How satisfied are you with your health?	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions ask about how much you have experienced certain things in the past with regard to pre covid era.

		Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	Very much	An extreme Amount
03.	To what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?	5	4	3	2	1
04.	How much do you need any medical treatment to function in your daily life?	5	4	3	2	1
05.	How much do you enjoy life?	1	2	3	4	5
06.	To what extent do you feel your life to be meaningful?	1	2	3	4	5
07.	How well are you able to concentrate?	1	2	3	4	5
08.	How safe do you feel in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5
09.	How healthy is your physical environment?	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions ask about how completely you experience or were able to do certain things in the past with regard to pre covid era.

		Not at all	A little	Moderately	Mostly	Completely
10.	Do you have enough energy for everyday life?	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Have you enough money to meet your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
13.	How available to you is the information that you need in your day-to-day life?	1	2	3	4	5
14.	To what extent do you have the opportunity for leisure activities?	1	2	3	4	5

		Very poor	Poor	Neither poor nor good	Good	Very good
15.	How well are you able to get around?	1	2	3	4	5

		Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
16.	How satisfied are you with your sleep?	1	2	3	4	5
17.	How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities?	1	2	3	4	5
18.	How satisfied are you with your capacity for work?	1	2	3	4	5
19.	How satisfied are you with yourself?	1	2	3	4	5
20.	How satisfied are you with your	1	2	3	4	5

	personal relationships?					
21.	How satisfied are you with your sex life?	1	2	3	4	5
22.	How satisfied are you with the support you get from your friends?	1	2	3	4	5
23.	How satisfied are you with the conditions of your living place?	1	2	3	4	5
24.	How satisfied are you with your access to health services?	1	2	3	4	5
25.	How satisfied are you with your transport?	1	2	3	4	5

The following question refers to how often you have felt or experienced certain things in the past with regard to pre covid era.

		Never	Seldom	Quite often	Very often	Always
26.	How often do you have negative feelings such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?	1	2	3	4	5