

Influence Of Socio-Economic Status, Resilience And Happiness On Life Satisfaction Among Youths In North-Central Nigeria

Reuben Lubem IBAISHWA

Department of Psychology,
Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna

Ann Terumbur AONDONA

Department of Psychology,
Benue State University, Makiurdi

Abstract: This research examined the influence of socio economic status, resilience and happiness on life satisfaction among youths in North Central Nigeria. An ex post facto design was adopted. The predictor variables are socio-economic status, resilience and happiness while the criterion variable was life satisfaction. 347 youths were selected within Benue State to participate in the study. Their ages ranged from 18 years and above, with 85 (58.6%) males and 60 (41.4%) females. 2-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for data analysis. Result of the study showed that the three hypotheses tested were significant. Findings from the first hypothesis indicate that socioeconomic status has a significant influence on life satisfaction. It was also found that resilience produce a significant main effect on life satisfaction among youths. Finally, the study found happiness to also significantly influence life satisfaction among youths. Based on the result of the study, it was concluded that socio economic status, resilience and happiness have influence on youths' life satisfaction. The study recommended that conscious efforts be made by the government and non-governmental organizations to boost the socio economic status and happiness of youths as well as support be provided to youths who have low so as to help them overcome difficulties during adverse life situations.

Keywords: socio economic status, Resilience, Happiness and Life Satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, there has been an increasing interest in positive psychology and in examining positive psychological constructs like happiness, meaning in life, subjective well-being, and life satisfaction. Positive psychology focuses on improving the quality of life of individuals and preventing the pathologies caused by negative events and stress (Baltaci, 2013; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). One of the most important constructs in positive psychology is subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is the assessment of cognitive and emotional life of a person consisted of several components: positive emotions, negative emotions, and life satisfaction (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Life satisfaction represents the cognitive dimension of subjective well-being (Huebner, Suldo, Smith & McKnight, 2004) and provides an overall assessment of the quality of a person's life and the perception of important life goals (Baltaci, 2013;

Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985; Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999).

Life Satisfaction has been a concern to researchers and this most probably has been necessitated primarily because of the dramatic increase in the occurrence of several life threatening mishaps in different parts of the world, cutting across America, Europe and even Africa. For instance, the memory of the kamikazes' crash into the world trade center in September 11th, 2001 is still fresh in the minds of Americans; the February 2010 Chile tsunami; the earthquake and leakages in nuclear weapons in Japan cannot be forgotten in haste by those who were victims and their relatives.

The African continent is having her own share of these mishaps, with several civil wars and military violence in most African nations, such as Uganda, Libya, Zimbabwe; just to mention a few. Of course Nigeria is not left out too; with the most recent Boko-haram upheaval in the Northern states, religious riots, farmers and Fulani herdsmen clashes, and post election violence in some of the states; the militants of the

Niger-Delta region with their abduction of ex-prisoners and citizens, vandalisation of petroleum pipelines and similar evils. In the North-Central, there has been violence, killings and maiming as a result of the clash between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, the boom blast in Abuja and Jos by Boko Haram that claims hundreds of lives. All of these have produced same results (deaths, maiming, displacements, chaos, and unbearable life situations for people), wherever such a thing has taken place.

The people at the fore of these vices have mainly been youths/adolescents who are supposed to be meaningful contributors to the development of the nation. What could have been responsible for this? An attempt to answer this question has led to the conduct of this research.

Life satisfaction is defined as a cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole and/or of specific life domains (Huebner, Valois, Paxton & Drane, 2005; Myers & Diener, 1995). Literature has revealed that life satisfaction as a construct has been central within the positive psychology (Gilman & Huebner, 2006). Whereas adult life satisfaction has been studied extensively, the life satisfaction of children and adolescents has only received attention more recently (Proctor, Linley & Maltby, 2009), and it is not known how much attention has been given to the study of this construct in Nigeria despite research findings that life satisfaction can serve as a buffer against psychological problems and disorders (Proctor, et al, 2009). It is on the premise of the aforementioned problems that this study set out to examine whether socio-economic status, resilience and happiness predict life satisfaction among adolescents in North-Central Nigeria. This is deemed necessary because of the upsurge in youth violence, militancy, religious riots, cultism, economic hardship, joblessness and such vices that seem to have characterized the Nigerian society.

Socio-economic status reflects the overall economic condition of an individual. The term 'economic' is selected because its meaning is broader than the term of 'financial' which mainly stress only the monetary implication. In addition, 'status' is preferable as it is a socially bound concept which shows the position of an individual in relation to others and the ownership of this 'status' is always thought to be an evidence of social rank. O'Rand (1982) reviewed the literature of gerontology and found socio-economic status was most often measured as income, occupational status, educational attainment, or some combined measures that included at least two or all of these factors. Among them, income level is the most common factor to indicate the economic status.

The minimal effect of income on life satisfaction applies across all income levels, including the extremely wealthy, although income more strongly relates to well-being when poverty threatens the attainment of the basic needs for food, shelter, safe water, and medical care (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). For five diverse adolescent populations ages 10 to 14, Bradley and Corwyn (2004) reported mixed results regarding income's ability to predict life satisfaction. In short, income has been weakly correlated with satisfaction and becomes a more important predictor as a population's poverty level increases. For the current study, youth socio-economic status will be assessed to examine whether socio-economic status predicts life satisfaction among youths.

Hypothesis 1: Socioeconomic status will positively influence life satisfaction.

Resilience is another variable which may predict life satisfaction among youths in Nigeria. The term resilience is derived from the verb 'resile', which refers to when an object is stretched or bent, it tends to spring back, to recoil, and to resume its former shape and size.

Resilience has become an important factor in research and mental health theory over the past decades (Achour & Nor, 2014; Walsh, 2003). According to Achour and Nor (2014) resilience has been defined by Ahmed (2007) as the ability to maintain a state of normal equilibrium in the face of extremely unfavourable circumstance. Resilience has also been defined as the capability to flourish despite normative fluctuations that take place throughout the life span (Bonanno, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Furthermore, Johnson, et al. (2008) stated that resilience is a psychological process developed in response to intense life stressor that facilitates healthy functioning. To be resilient includes constructive and growth-enhancing consequences of adversity or challenges (Strumpfer, 2003). While some people are naturally resilient, as their personality may contribute to the prediction of resilience, others may have to work at it (Campbell-Sills, Cohan & Stein, 2006; Griffith, 2007). It is, co-determined by environmental and personal characteristics (Lew, 2001). It is therefore expected that resilience will positively predict life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Resilience will positively influence life satisfaction.

Another psychological variable that the study seeks to examine its predictive power on life satisfaction is happiness. Happiness has been defined as "a mental state comprising many ingredients including: the presence of pleasant positive moods or emotions, the absence of unpleasant negative moods or emotions, and satisfaction, on reflection, with life in general or with at least some specific aspects of life".

What role does happiness have in an individual's life? Many people believe that happiness is ultimately what makes life worth living and thus becomes the motivating force behind their behaviours (Brulde, 2007). Is happiness the primary source of obtaining a good life and if so is it universally sought after in the same manner? It can safely be assumed that most people -- regardless of race, culture, socioeconomic status, marital status, health and so forth -- strive for happiness throughout life. However, there are some cultures that do not view happiness as the purpose of life. For example, in some Asian cultures such as China, it is more important to follow the norms of society (i.e. productivity and economic power) rather than personal feelings (Grinde, 2002). Even so, happiness is worth scientific pursuit because it is a common goal and desire that many individuals share. People rate personal happiness as very important in their lives (Diener, Suh, Smith, & Shao, 1995). Happiness is also associated with success in different life domains and is related to positive mental health (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Life satisfaction and individual happiness are different but linked. Life satisfaction, pleasant emotions, and unpleasant emotions are separable, different components of happiness and unhappiness. Life satisfaction differs from the affective

components of happiness in that it is based on a reflective judgment.

Hypothesis 3: Happiness will positively influence life satisfaction.

II. METHOD

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

The design is ex post facto. The predictor variables are socio-economic status, resilience and happiness. The criterion variable is life satisfaction which was measured as a single or composite construct.

B. PARTICIPANTS

The target population were youths. The study randomly selected 347 youths within Benue State, North Central Nigeria. Their ages ranged from 18 years and above, with 85 (58.6%) males and 60 (41.4%) females. Respondents varied on their educational qualifications and marital status.

C. INSTRUMENT

A questionnaire was used for data collection, comprising four sections. The first section measured the demographic characteristics like age, sex, marital status, level of education and socio-economic status. The second section contained items from the new resilience scale developed by Ryan and Caltabiano (2009). The new resilience scale consists of 25 items. The scale is self-rated on a 5-point scale (0-4), with higher scores reflecting greater resilience. The coefficient alpha value of the scale is .72.

Section three of the questionnaire contained 18 items that measure happiness. This section measured happiness using Orientations to Happiness Scale (OTH; Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005). The scale consists of 3 subscales (life of pleasure, life of engagement, and life of meaning). The eighteen items scale consists of six items for each subscale. A sample item is 'My life serves a higher purpose' (life of meaning). Answers are given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = 'very much unlike me' through 5 = 'very much like me.' The OTH demonstrated good psychometric properties in various studies in Western society (Chen, 2010; Peterson et al. 2005; Peterson et al. 2007). The final section of the questionnaire contains items on life satisfaction using the Life Satisfaction Index-Short Form (LIS-SF).

The Life Satisfaction Index-Short Form (LIS-SF) was developed by Barrett and Murk (2009) to measure overall construct of life satisfaction. The original version of the Life Satisfaction Index (LSI) is a 35-item questionnaire that measures the construct of life satisfaction. The instrument development process using 654 adult participants yielded a Cronbach alpha reliability of .95 (Barrett & Murk, 2009) and high correlation with the Satisfaction with Life Scale ($r = .70$) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985)

The short version LSI-SF has 12-items and is scored on six-point Likert type structure (1=strongly disagree, 6=strongly agree for item 2, 4, 5&6 while 1=strongly agree,

6= strongly disagree for item 1, 3, 7-12). Barrett and Murk (2009) reported Cronbach alpha reliability of .90 and very high correlation with the original version. While Onyishi, Okongwu and Ugwu (2012) reported item total correlation range of .27 to .77. The LSI-SF had Cronbach's alpha reliability of .82; and concurrent validity co-efficient of .66 with the Life Satisfaction Index-Z (Neugarten, Havighurst & Tobin, 1961).

D. PROCEDURE

A set of questionnaires for assessing the variables of the study were given out to the participants with the help of research assistance from Nassarawa State University, Keffi, University of Abuja and Benue State University. The researchers administer some of the questionnaires to youths in Makurdi, Benue State. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed but 371 were returned. Out of the 371 returned questionnaires, 24 were discarded because of improper filling retaining 347 that were used for data analysis.

E. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using correlation 2-way ANOVA.

III. RESULTS

Table 1 is a summary analysis of variance (ANOVA) showing the influence of three independent variables: socioeconomic status, resilience and happiness on life satisfaction.

The result of the analysis of variance on table 1 shows the three main effects were significant. However, 2-way and 3-way were statistically insignificant. The result showed that socioeconomic status has a significant influence on life satisfaction $F = 27.016 = df = 2, 335, p < .01$. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that socioeconomic status will significantly influence life satisfaction was accepted. Socioeconomic status is a significant factor in life satisfaction likely because socioeconomic status is the ability to provide an individual with the comfort needed to live a satisfied life.

The test for the influence of resilience on youths life satisfaction was significant $F = 25.664, df = 1, 335, p < .01$. Youths with high levels of resilience significantly differ from those with low levels of resilience on life satisfaction. The second hypothesis which states that resilience will significantly influence life satisfaction was accepted. Youths with high resilience will be more satisfied with their lives compare to those with low resilience.

The result also shows that happiness is a factor influencing life satisfaction $F = 9.713, df = 1, 335, p < .01$. Youths with high levels of happiness significantly differ from those with low levels of happiness on life satisfaction. Therefore, the third hypothesis was also accepted.

Results from table 1 show no significant interaction effect of socioeconomic status and resilience, socioeconomic status and happiness, resilience and happiness as well as socioeconomic status, resilience and happiness.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	6796.566 ^a	11	617.870	5.073	.000	.143
Intercept	2170732.779	1	2170732.779	17822.543	.000	.982
Socio-economic status (SES)	3.908	2	1231.954	12.016**	.001	.000
Resilience	3125.853	1	3125.853	25.664**	.000	.071
Happiness	1183.026	1	1183.026	9.713**	.002	.028
SES * resilience	17.055	2	8.527	.070	.932	.000
SES * happiness	185.707	2	92.854	.762	.467	.005
Resilience * happiness	191.001	1	191.001	1.568	.211	.005
SES * resilience * happiness	233.353	2	116.677	.958	.385	.006
Error	40802.004	335	121.797			
Total	2699507.000	347				
Corrected Total	47598.571	346				

Key: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 1: A summary of analysis of variance on socioeconomic status, resilience, happiness and life satisfaction

IV. DISCUSSION

All human activities are geared toward making life more meaningful and the desire for happiness is a basic and universal human drive. Youths at all levels need a comfortable life so as to enable them live a satisfied life and avoid engaging in social vice such as criminal activities. In today's fast changing world, the influence of socio-economic status, resilience and happiness cannot be underestimated in determining one's satisfaction with life as has been stated in many empirical studies. Life satisfaction refers to how a person evaluates his own life, his general happiness, achievement of goals, freedom from worries, having a positive ego and harmonizing with one's settings effectively.

In the present study, life satisfaction was examined on socioeconomic status, resilience and happiness. The result of 2-way analysis of variance conducted revealed that results of the main effects were significant while that of the interaction effects were not significant.

Result of the main effect showed that the first hypothesis pertaining to the influence of socioeconomic status resilience on life satisfaction was supported by the findings. This finding implies that socio economic status which reflects the income level of an individual has positive effect on life satisfaction. It's therefore, entails that youths with high socio economic status have a higher level of life satisfaction compared to those from low socio economic status. The finding tally with previous work by Bradley and Corwyn (2004).

The 2nd hypothesis pertaining to the influence of resilience on life satisfaction was supported by the findings. In this way there was positive influence of resilience on life

satisfaction. This finding implies that youths with high level of resilience – which is the ability to maintain a state of normal equilibrium in the face of extremely unfavourable circumstance cope with life adversity well and have a higher level of life satisfaction compared to youths with low level of resilience. The finding lends credence to previous work by Akbar, Akram, Ahmed, Hussain, La, and Ijaz (2014) who in their study found resilience to correlate positively with life satisfaction. Empirical literature showed that resilience has an important relationship with life outcomes. Resilience can assist people enhance their life satisfaction (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Cohn et al., 2009). Abolghasemi and Varaniyab (2010) also demonstrated that psychological resilience predicted increased life satisfaction in students. Thus, resilience is considered a protective factor for quality of life and contributes towards greater life satisfaction. This may be because people with high resilience are more likely to effectively meet the challenges of their lives, flexibly adapt to the stresses of their lives, and are more likely to become successful, healthy, and happy in the future (Bonanno, 2004, Cohn et al., 2009).

The 3rd hypothesis was that happiness will positively influence life satisfaction among youths. Findings of the results support the hypothesis implying that youths with high level of happiness are satisfied with their life compared to those with low level of happiness. Youths who have the presence of pleasant positive moods or emotions, the absence of unpleasant negative moods or emotions, on reflection, with life in general or with at least some specific aspects of life are more satisfied with their life than youths who have absence of pleasant positive moods or emotions and presence of unpleasant negative moods or emotions in their life. Happiness for youth is ultimately what makes life worth living and thus becomes the motivating force behind their behaviours.

A. IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The present study has made valuable contributions to the life satisfaction literature by examining the influence of socio economic status, resilience and happiness on satisfaction with life among youths in central Nigeria. This study revealed that economic status, resilience and happiness greatly influenced youth life satisfaction. The results of this study suggest important practical implications for human capital management especially in the area of management of youths so as to avoid the current crisis facing central Nigeria and Nigeria as whole. The government as well as parents are advised to ensure that the socio economic status of youths is enhanced which will lead to life satisfaction thus reducing the number of youths that engaged in deviant life behaviours. Also, parents should ensure that their wards are provided with the basic necessities of life so as to increase their happiness which lead to life satisfaction.

Given that individuals differed from one another in their life satisfaction, this study revealed the influence of resilience on life satisfaction. The practical implication of this is that youths who have low resilience are at risk of having poor life satisfaction thus leading them to engage in criminal behaviours. Youths who have low resilience should therefore

be provided with the necessary support as they may benefit most from extra support during adverse life situations.

B. CONCLUSION

This study sought to examine the influence of socio economic status, resilience and happiness on life satisfaction among youths in central Nigeria. The findings of this study show that youths' socio economic status, resilience and happiness significantly influence life satisfaction. Based on these findings, the study concludes that:

- ✓ Socio economic status of youths has a significant influence on youths' life satisfaction therefore conscious efforts should be made by the government and non-governmental organizations to boost the socio economic status of youths.
- ✓ Resilience significantly influences youths' life satisfaction. It is recommended based on this finding that youths who have low resilience be provided with support which will help them overcome difficulties during adverse life situations.
- ✓ Finally, the study concludes that happiness significantly influence life satisfaction among youths. Parents and government should ensure that youths are provided with the necessities of life which leads to happiness.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abolghasemi, A., & Varaniyab, S. T. (2010). Resilience and perceived stress: Predictors of life satisfaction in the students of success and failure. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 748-752.
- [2] Achour, M., & Nor, M.R.M (2014). The effects of social support and resilience on life satisfaction of secondary school students. *Journal of Academic and Applied Studies*, 4(1), 12-20.
- [3] Ahmed, A. S. (2007). Posttraumatic stress disorder, resilience and vulnerability. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 13, 369-375. doi: 10.1192/apt.bp.106.003236.
- [4] Akbar, M., Akram, M., Ahmed, M., Hussain, M. S., La, V., & Ijaz, S. (2014). Relationship between Resilience and Life Satisfaction among Nomadic. *International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies*, 6(3), 515-529.
- [5] Baltaci, H.S. (2013). Turkish 6th-8th grade students' social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and their Implications*, 4 (2), 1-14.
- [6] Barrett, A. J., & Murk, P. J. (2009). Life Satisfaction Index for the Third Age- Short Form. *Proceedings of the 2009 Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Community and Extension Education*. Chicago: North eastern Illinois University, Chicago
- [7] Bonanno, G.A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? *American Psychologist*, 59(1), 20-28. doi: 10.1037/1942-9681.59.1.101.
- [8] Bradley, R. H., & Corwyn, R. F. (2004). Life satisfaction among European American, African American,
- [9] Chinese American, Mexican American, and Dominican American adolescents. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 28, 385-400.
- [10] Brulde, B. (2007). Happiness and the good life. Introduction and conceptual framework. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 8, 1-14.
- [11] Campbell-Sills L., Cohan S.L., & Stein, M. B. (2006). Relationship of Resilience to Personality, Coping, and Psychiatric Symptoms in Young Adults. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 44, 585- 599.
- [12] Chen, G. (2010). Validating the Orientations to Happiness Scale in a Chinese Sample of University Students. *Social Indicators Research*, 99 (3), 431-442
- [13] Cohn, M.A., Fredrickson, B.L., Brown, S.L. Mikels, J.A., & Conway, A.M. (2009). Happiness unpacked: positive emotions increase life satisfaction by building resilience, *Emotion*, 9 (3), 361-368.
- [14] Diener, E., Emmons, R.A., Larsen, R.J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49, 71-75.
- [15] Diener, E., Suh, E., Lucas, R., & Smith, H. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(2), 276-302.
- [16] Diener, E., Suh, E. K., Smith, H., & Shao, L. (1995). National differences in reported well-being: Why do they occur? *Social Indicators Research*, 34, 7-32. doi:10.1007/BF01078966
- [17] Fredrickson, B. L., Cohn, M. A., Coffey, K. A., Pek, J., & Finkel, S.M. (2008). Open hearts build lives: positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95 (5), 1045-1062.
- [18] Gilman, R. & Huebner, E. S. (2003). A review of life satisfaction research with children and adolescents, *School Psychology Quarterly*, 18, 192-205.
- [19] Gilman, R., & Huebner, E.S. (2006). Characteristics of adolescents who report very high life satisfaction. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 35, 311-319.
- [20] Griffith, D. (2007). A new year's resolution for your emotional health. Retrieved November 2nd, 2014, from www.healthatoz.com.
- [21] Grinde, B. (2002). Happiness in the perspective of evolutionary psychology. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3 (4), 331-354.
- [22] Huebner, E. S., Suldo, S. M., Smith, L. C., & McKnight, C. G. (2004). Life satisfaction in children and youth: Empirical foundations and implications for school psychologists. *Psychology in the Schools*.
- [23] Huebner, E. S., Valois, R. F., Paxton, R. J., & Drane, J. W. (2005). Middle school students' perceptions of quality of life. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6, 15-24.
- [24] Johnson, D. C., Polusny, M. A., Erbes, C. R., King, D., King, L., Litz, B. T., Schnurr, P. P., Friedman, M.,
- [25] Pietrzak, R. H. & Southwick, S. M. (2008). Resilience and response to stress: Development and initial validation of the Response to Stressful Experiences Scale (RSES). Unpublished manuscript, Naval Health Research Center, San Diego, CA.

- [27]Lew, C.C. (2001). A factor analytical study of adult career concerns, career status and career resilience. Dissertation. Rand Afrikaans University, South Africa.
- [28]Lyubomirsky, S.L., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005) The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*, 14, 803–855.
- [29]Myers, D. G., & Diener, E. (1995). Who is happy? *Psychological Science*, 6, 10-19.
- [30]Neugarten, B. L., Havighurst, R. J., & Tobin, S. S. (1961). The measurement of life satisfaction. *Journal of Gerontology*, 16, 134-143.
- [31]Onyishi, I., Okongwu, O., & Ugwu, F. (2012). Personality and social support as predictors of life satisfaction of Nigerian prisons officers. *European Scientific Journal*, 8(20), 110-125.
- [32]Proctor, C.L., Linley, P.A., & Maltby, J. (2009). Youth life satisfaction: A review of the literature. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 10, 583-630.
- [33]Ryan, L., & Caltabiano, M.L. (2009). Development of a New Resilience Scale: The Resilience in Midlife Scale (RIM Scale). *Asian Social Science*, 5 (11), 39-51
- [34]Seligman, M.E.P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.55.1.5
- [35]Strumpfer, D. J. W. (2003). Resilience and burnout: A stitch that could save nine. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 33(2), 69-79.
- [36]Walsh, F. (2003). Family resilience: A Framework for clinical practice. *Family Process*, 42(1), 1-18.

IJIRAS