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A probe into the academic life-satisfaction of the school-going adolescents

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Abstract

Life satisfaction is the subjective appreciation and enjoyment of one's overall quality of life, encompassing cognitive evaluations and feelings about various aspects, including global judgments, domain-specific satisfaction, positive affect, and low levels of negative affect. To ascertain the status of academic life satisfaction of school-going adolescents, the present study was carried out through the descriptive survey method by administering the Multidimensional student's life satisfaction scale (Huebner *et al.*, 1998) on a random sample of 1024 school-going adolescents of South 24 Parganas. The results reflected that life satisfaction derived from family and school was very high; and life satisfaction derived from having friends, living environment and self-satisfaction were high, and life satisfaction in totality was also high. The female school-going adolescents expressed significantly higher life satisfaction in the dimensions of family, friends, school and self, and also in composite multidimensional student's life satisfaction than the male school-going adolescents. However, no significant gender differences were found in the satisfaction from the living environment. It might be concluded that the school-going adolescents received high educational support, warmth, emotional involvement, responsiveness, care and guidance from parents and social support from their friends, School and living environment.

Keywords: Academic life satisfaction, life satisfaction, positive psychology, quality of life, subjective well-being

1. Introduction

Synonyms like 'quality of life', 'well-being' and 'happiness' are the positive sides of human behavior in the field of positive psychology. 'Quality of life' is the person's appraisals of their own 'life', which has been differentiated between two major perspectives: objective and subjective. Objective measures focus on external notions of the good life, whereas subjective measures focus on internal evaluations of life circumstances known as subjective well-being (Huebner, 2004) [16]. Veenhoven (2000) [30] represented 'objective' quality of life as 'livability of environment', 'life-ability of the person' and 'utility of life'. Subjective well-being (SWB) is an umbrella term describing an individual's behavior under several separable components: "life satisfaction (Global judgments of one's life), satisfaction with important domains (e.g., marriage and work satisfaction), positive affect (Experiencing many pleasant emotions and moods), and low levels of negative affect (Experiencing few unpleasant emotions and moods)" (Diener, 2000) [10]. Diener, Lucas, and Oishi (2002) [12] defined SWB as a "person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life as a whole" (p. 63). The positive and negative affects are two *hedonic* components that refer to the *affective* and *emotional* aspects of the construct, known as emotional well-being; whereas life satisfaction is a global judgment, component based on the *cognitive-judgmental* aspects (Diener, 1994; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) [9, 11]. 'Happiness' is the synonym of 'emotional well-being'. Life satisfaction refers to a person's cognitive, judgmental process which includes his or her evaluations and feelings about the quality of life as a whole. (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) [11]. "Life satisfaction is defined as the degree to which a person evaluates the overall quality of his or her present life-as-a-whole positively" (Veenhoven, 2014) [31]. It is our subjective appreciation and enjoyment of our life as-a-whole. It has been measured as a student's subjective, global evaluation of the positivity of

his or her present life as-a-whole or with specific aspects of life, such as family, friends, school, community and self (Huebner, 1994) ^[18]. Global life satisfaction refers to a general, unidimensional evaluation of the quality of a person's life that is over and above evaluations of specific domains. Multidimensional life satisfaction measures would offer a more differentiated picture of the perceived quality of life of adolescents and provide a better viewpoint of

adolescents' life satisfaction judgments than unidimensional or global measurements (Huebner, Laughlin, Ash & Gilman, 1998) ^[20]. Academic Life Satisfaction is operationally defined as the expected degree of satisfaction (Cognitive evaluation) in one's life in school by the fulfilment of his/her important academic goals or aspirations (Subjective perception).

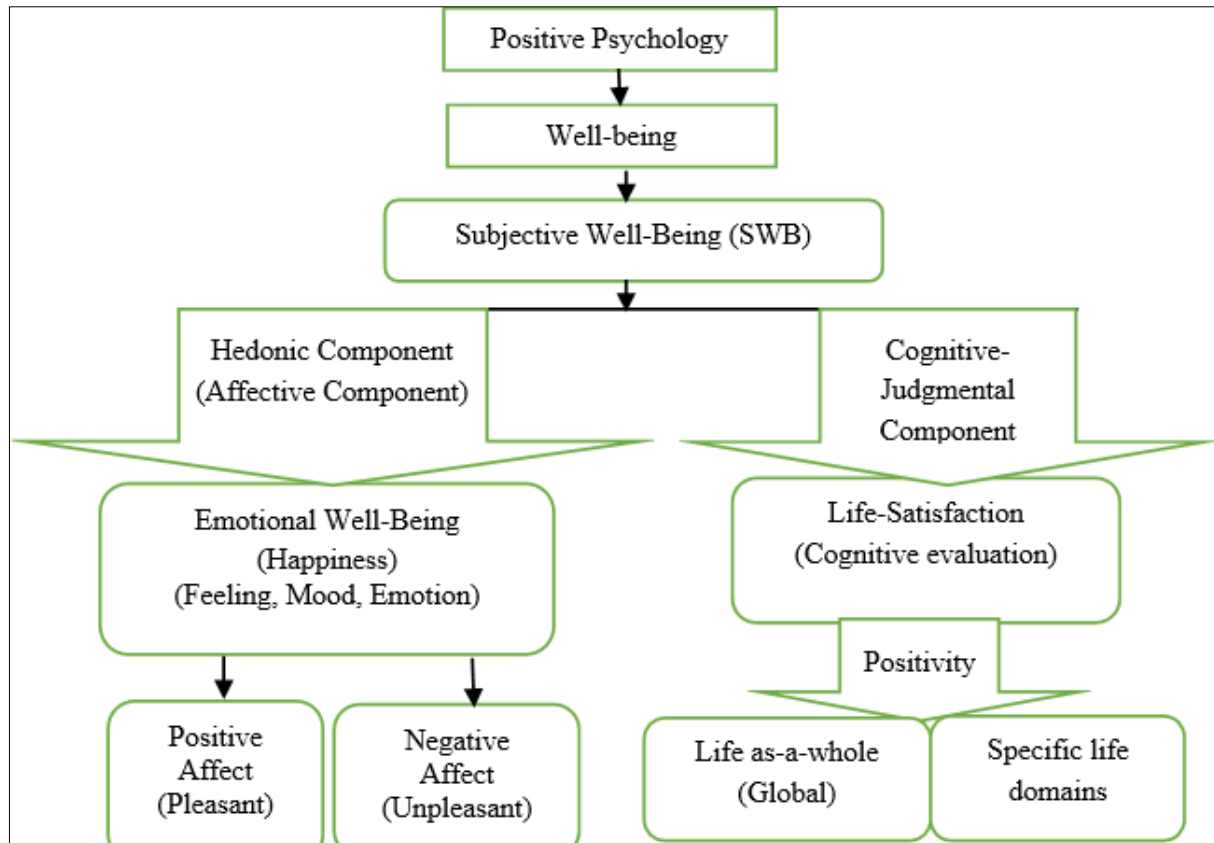


Fig 1: Life-satisfaction

In the case of school-going adolescents of South 24 Parganas, there may remain several causes to put them into the academic life-satisfaction.

1.1 Objective of the study

The objectives of this study were

1. To find out the present status of academic life satisfaction among the school-going adolescents of South 24 Parganas District.
2. To compare the academic life satisfaction of male and female school-going adolescents.
3. The Hypotheses were-
4. The school-going adolescents considering both male and female as a whole have high academic life satisfaction.
5. The male school-going adolescents and the female school-going adolescents do not differ with respect to their academic life satisfaction.

2. Academic life satisfaction – The construct of the study

The Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction judgments refer to a student's satisfaction with important domains of life, such as family, friends, school, living environment and self (Huebner, 1994; Huebner, Laughlin, Ash & Gilman, 1998) ^[18, 20]. Family life satisfaction refers to the student's

satisfaction with their relationship with family members as well as the family members' relationships with each other. The Friends life satisfaction refers to the school-going adolescent's satisfaction with their peers. School life satisfaction is defined as a student's satisfaction with school life in terms of interest, learning, and educational activities. Academic self-satisfaction is defined as the student's level of satisfaction with himself or herself and other people's opinions in that regard (looking-glass self). Lastly, the Living environment life satisfaction refers to the student's satisfaction with the immediate community and people in the student's neighborhood.

3. A Brief Review on Academic life-satisfaction

The satisfaction of family relationships in adolescent's multidimensional life satisfaction judgments is most important (Huebner, 1994) ^[18] and depends on the quality of family like Parental social support (Park, & Kim, 2004; Suldo, & Huebner, 2004) ^[25, 27], parental warmth (Cenkseven - Önder, 2012; Chang, McBride-Chang, Stewart, & Au, 2003) ^[3, 4], parental behavioral and emotional involvement (Wenk, Hardesty, Morgan, & Blair, 1994) ^[32], parental supervision (Suldo, & Huebner, 2004) ^[25], parental responsiveness i.e., parents' degree of sensitivity, supportiveness, and involvement.

Student satisfaction in friend life domains was examined in the previous study concerning the quality of friends i.e., peer attachment relationships (Nickerson, & Nagle, 2004) [23], Perceived quality of relationships with peers (Greenberg, Siegel, & Leitch, 1983) [14], informal help by peers (Burke, & Weir, 1978) [2].

School life satisfaction is the student's cognitive evaluation of the good quality of school life such as classroom environment (Povedano-Diaz, Muñiz-Rivas, & Vera-Perea, 2019) [26], student-teacher relations and parental involvement in schooling (Suldo, Shaffer, & Riley, 2008) [29], school-related social support from teachers, classmates, and parents (Baker, Dilly, Aupperlee, & Patil, 2003; Natvig, Albrektsen, & Qvarnström, 2003; Danielsen, Samdal, Hetland, & Wold, 2009) [1, 22, 7]. Suldo, Shaffer, and Riley (2008) [29] conducted a study in which "behavioral contexts (Grades received, in-school conduct), social contexts (school climate), and cognitive contexts (Academic personal beliefs, attachment to school) of school were all linked to students' global life satisfaction, largely through associations with students' satisfaction with school".

The Self-satisfaction domains tend to be more strongly related to life satisfaction among adolescents (Park & Huebner, 2005) [24] who felt many academic competencies (Leung, McBride-Chang, & Lai, 2004; Danielsen, Samdal, Hetland, & Wold, 2009) [21, 7], academic self-efficacy (Huebner, Gilman, & Laughlin, 1999; Suldo & Huebner, 2006) [19, 28] congruence between implicit motives and self-attributed goals (Hofer, & Chasiotis, 2003) [15].

Char, Adhikari, and Mahata (2017) [6] found that, on average, adolescents attending school in the Purulia district exhibited high levels of life satisfaction. According to Das, Adhikari, and Bhattacharya (2020) [8], findings revealed that female learners in West Bengal, India received strong support and encouragement from their families and schools, but less so from friends and their living environment. Overall, the study suggests that female learners derive high satisfaction from their lives, with varying degrees of support and influence from different aspects of their social and educational environments. As reported by Char, Karmakar, Saha, and Adhikari (2023) [5], findings indicated that adolescents in the Purulia district, West Bengal received significant inspiration, affection, and encouragement from their families, considerable support from friends, substantial encouragement and support from schools, and overall satisfaction with their lives.

4. Methods

The present study was carried out through the descriptive survey method. The details regarding the variable, sample, tool, procedure of data collection, and statistical technique are reported hereunder.

4.1 Variables

Academic life satisfaction was the only variable of the present study.

4.2 Sample

To make the sample representative multiphasic stratified random sampling technique was adopted. In the present study, 1024 school-going adolescents aged 14-16 yrs. studying in 9th and 10th standard were randomly selected from 20 Government Sponsored Secondary and Higher

Secondary Schools (Bengali medium) of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal.

4.3 Tool of Research

The following research tool was used in the present study for data collection. The tool was selected by applying yardsticks of relevance, appropriateness, reliability, validity and suitability. A brief description of the tool is given hereunder.

4.3.1 Multidimensional Student's Life Satisfaction scale (MSLSS) (Huebner, Laughlin, Ash & Gilman, 1998) [20]

This 5-point Likert-type scale is designed to assess students' overall life satisfaction as well as specific domain satisfaction (i.e., Family, Friends, School, Living Environment and Self). In the scale, there are 40 no. of items including 5 no. of subscales.

Table 1: Subscale Wise Distribution of Items

Subscale	No. of Items
Family	7
Friends	9
School	8
Living Environment	9
Self	7
Total	40

The domains contain an unequal number of items. The mean score of each dimension is made comparable by normalizing.

The normalization procedure is as follows:

Normalized Mean = Mean of the item responses in a dimension (or total scale)/Number of total items of the dimension (or total scale).

Therefore, the maximum score in each domain is 5, the minimum is 1 and the mid value is 3.

The mean of the scores of each dimension or total scale was interpreted as:

1.00 to 1.99	Very Low life satisfaction
2.00 to 2.99	Low life satisfaction
3.00 to 3.99	High life satisfaction
4.00 to 5.00	Very high life satisfaction

4.4 Procedure for Data Collection

The heads of the institutions were contacted for his/her permission to collect the necessary data. The relevant data were collected by administering the above-mentioned tool on the subjects under study by the directions provided in the manual of the tool.

4.5 Analysis of the Collected Data

The descriptive statistics were presented by computing with the help of SPSS-20.00 software. To ascertain the objective descriptive statistics such as minimum, maximum, range, mean and standard deviation have been calculated and interpreted by the different statistical techniques.

5. Results

The results of the present study are presented in tabular forms. Here the results are placed in two sub-sections – (a) Descriptive Presentation and (b) Comparative Analysis.

5.1 Descriptive Presentation

To prove the hypothesis-i (i.e., The school-going adolescents considering both male and female as a whole have high academic life satisfaction) descriptive statistics were computed and the table-5.1 exhibits the descriptive

statistics of scores on different facets and a total of the Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) of the school-going adolescents in the present study.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of multidimensional student's life satisfaction scale (MSLSS) scores of the school-going adolescents

MSLSS Score	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
Family	1027	3.86	1.14	5.00	4.04	0.61	Very High Satisfaction
Friends	1027	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.73	0.64	High Satisfaction
School	1027	3.62	1.38	5.00	4.00	0.62	Very High Satisfaction
Living Environment	1027	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.50	0.78	High Satisfaction
Self	1027	3.71	1.29	5.00	3.34	0.58	High Satisfaction
MSLSS in Totality	1027	3.37	1.63	5.00	3.72	0.48	High Satisfaction

Table 2 exhibits the descriptive statistics of scores on different dimensions and as a total of the Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) of school-going adolescents. In the case of the dimension related to satisfaction with family life, the "minimum" of the scores was 1.14 and the "maximum" of those was 5.00 and the range was 3.86; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 4.04 and 0.61 respectively. Next, in the case of the dimension related to satisfaction of having friends the "minimum" of the scores was 1.00 and the "maximum" of those was 5.00 and the range was 4.00; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 3.73 and 0.64 respectively. Then, in the case of the dimension related to satisfaction with having the school the "minimum" of the scores was 1.38 and the "maximum" of those was 5.00 and the range was 3.62; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 4.00 and 0.62 respectively. Then in the case of the dimension related to the satisfaction derived from the living environment, the

"minimum" of the scores was 1.00 and the "maximum" of those was 5.00 and the range was 4.00; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 3.50 and 0.78 respectively. Next, in the case of the dimension related to satisfaction derived from self the "minimum" of the scores was 1.29 and the "maximum" of those was 5.00 and the range was 3.71; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 3.34 and 0.58 respectively. Finally, in the case of MSLSS scores in totality, the "minimum" of the scores was 1.63 and the "maximum" of those was 5.00 and the range was 3.37; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 3.72 and 0.48 respectively.

Figure 1 depicts the bar diagram of means scores of different subscales (Family, Friends, School, Living Environment and Self) of the Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) of school-going adolescents.

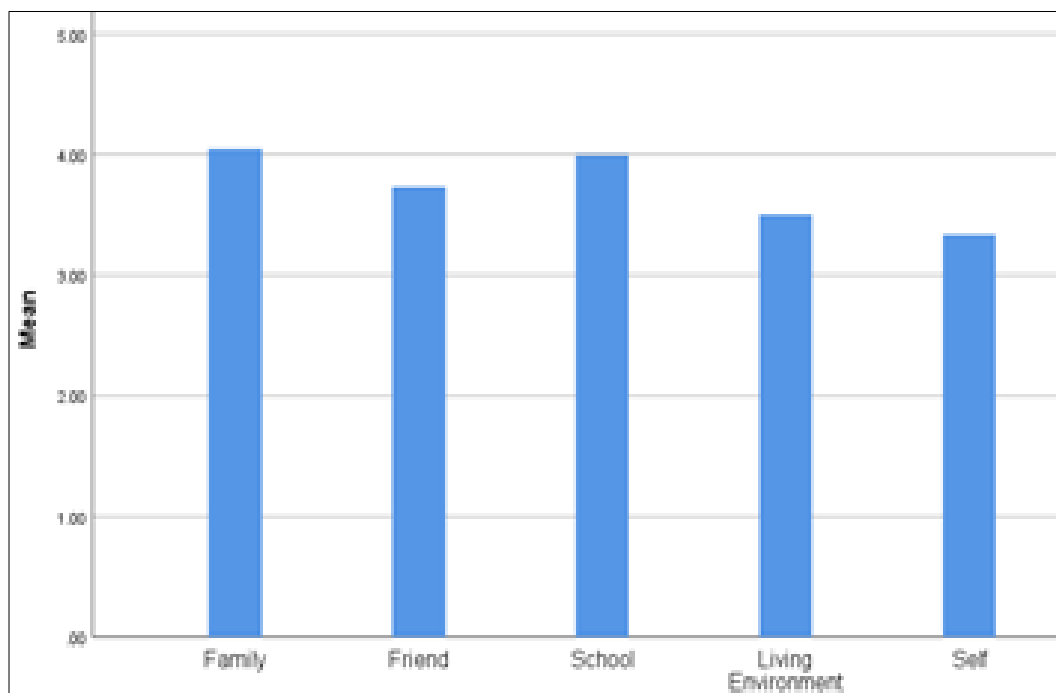


Fig 1: Bar Diagram of Different Subscale's Mean Scores of MSLSS

Figure 5.1 (a) depicts the histogram with a normal curve of MSLSS scores of school-going adolescents considering males and females as a whole. By visually examining we

come to know that the said distribution was about to normal (Fein, Gilmour, Machin & Hendry, 2022) [13].

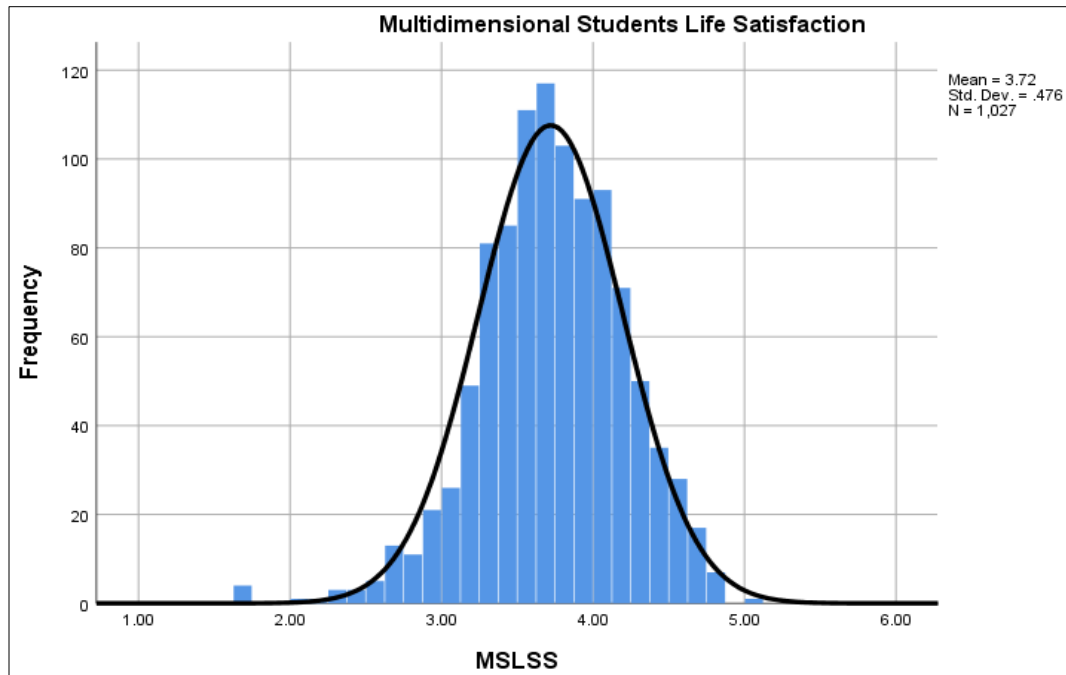


Fig 2 (a): Histogram with Normal Probability Curve of MSLSS Score

5.2 Gender Wise Comparative Analysis

To prove the hypothesis-ii (i.e., the male school-going adolescents and the female school-going adolescents do not

differ with respect to their academic life satisfaction) the results of the gender wise comparative analysis are presented in tabular forms.

Table 2 (a): Group Statistics of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) Score of the male school-going adolescents and the female school-going adolescents

Life Satisfaction	Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
Family	Male	572	3.96	0.61	High
	Female	455	4.16	0.59	Very High
Friends	Male	572	3.65	0.67	High
	Female	455	3.84	0.57	High
School	Male	572	3.87	0.67	High
	Female	455	4.15	0.52	Very High
Living Environment	Male	572	3.49	0.76	High
	Female	455	3.52	0.80	High
Self	Male	572	3.27	0.61	High
	Female	455	3.42	0.54	High
MSLSS in Totality	Male	572	3.65	0.49	High
	Female	455	3.81	0.44	High

Table-5.2(a) shows group statistics of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) scores of the male school-going adolescents and the female school-going adolescents. In the case of satisfaction derived from Family, the means of male and female were 3.96 and 4.16 respectively; again the standard deviations were 0.61 and 0.59 respectively. Next, in the case of satisfaction derived from Friends, the means of male and female were 3.65 and 3.84 respectively; again the standard deviations were 0.67 and 0.57 respectively. Then, in the case of satisfaction derived from School, the means of male and female were 3.87 and 4.15 respectively; again the standard deviations were 0.67 and 0.52 respectively. Next, in the case of satisfaction derived from Living Environment, the means of

male and female adolescents were 3.49 and 3.52 respectively; again the standard deviations were 0.76 and 0.80 respectively. Then, in the case of satisfaction derived from self, the means of male and female were 3.27 and 3.42 respectively; again the standard deviations were 0.61 and 0.54 respectively. Finally, in the case of total Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) scores the mean of male and female were 3.65 and 3.81 respectively; again, the standard deviations were 0.49 and 0.44 respectively.

Figure 2 shows the bar diagram of means of group statistics in different dimensions of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) scores of the male school-going adolescents and the female school-going adolescents.

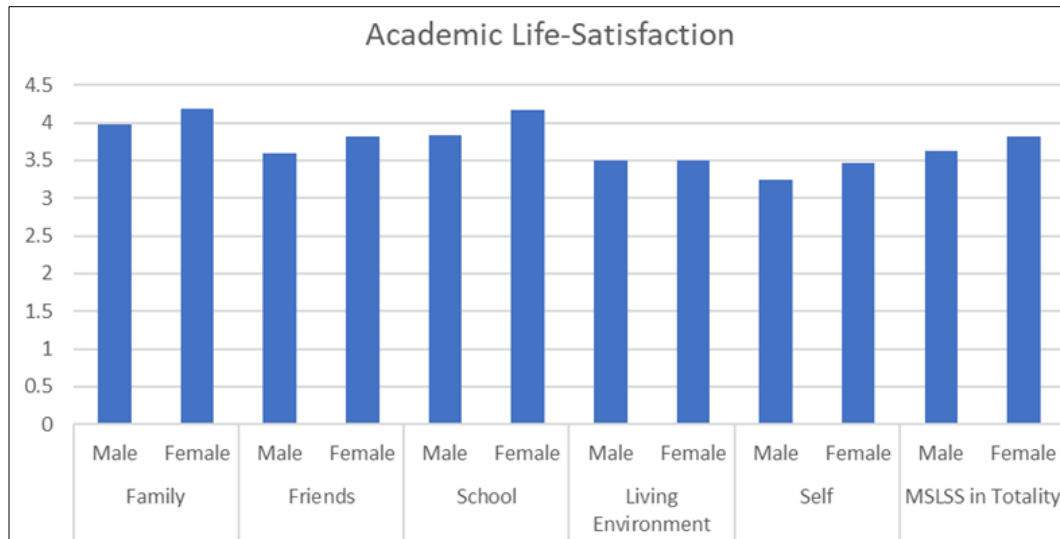


Fig 3: Bar Diagram of Means of Group Statistics in Different Dimensions of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) Scores of the male school-going adolescents and the female school-going adolescents

Table 3 (b): Results of Independent Samples Test of Type Wise Comparison of Means of Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) Scores of the male school-going adolescents and the female school-going adolescents

Life Satisfaction		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Family	Equal variances assumed	1.78	0.18	-5.24	1025.00	0.00
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.26	987.55	0.00
Friends	Equal variances assumed	8.38	0.00	-4.86	1025.00	0.00
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.95	1020.61	0.00
School	Equal variances assumed	25.13	0.00	-7.21	1025.00	0.00
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.42	1024.52	0.00
Living Environment	Equal variances assumed	0.01	0.92	-0.52	1025.00	0.60
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.52	952.29	0.60
Self	Equal variances assumed	8.11	0.00	-4.05	1025.00	0.00
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.10	1011.57	0.00
MSLSS in Totality	Equal variances assumed	8.70	0.00	-5.62	1025.00	0.00
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.70	1013.83	0.00

From Table 2 (b) it is observed that the two groups (male & female) differed (Statistically) significantly in all dimensions of the Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) and Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) score in total except the dimension related to Living Environment.

6. Discussion

The results from Table 5.1 indicated that when both genders (male and female) were considered collectively, school-going adolescents exhibited very high scores on the Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) for life satisfaction derived from family and school. Additionally, high scores were observed for life satisfaction related to having friends, the living environment, and self-satisfaction. Consequently, the overall life satisfaction scores were also notably high. Hence, Hypothesis (i) was failed to reject. The results of the current study could be justified by prior research on family life satisfaction (Wenk, Hardesty, Morgan, & Blair, 1994; Chang, McBride-Chang, Stewart, & Au, 2003; Park, & Kim, 2004; Suldo, & Huebner, 2004; Cenkseven – Önder, 2012) [32, 4, 25, 27, 3], friends life satisfaction (Burke, & Weir, 1978; Siegel, & Leitch, 1983; Nickerson, & Nagle, 2004; Greenberg) [2, 14, 23], and school life satisfaction (Natvig, Albrektsen, & Qvarnström, 2003; Baker, Dilly, Aupperlee, & Patil, 2003; Suldo, Shaffer, & Riley, 2008; Danielsen, Samdal, Hetland,

& Wold, 2009; Povedano-Diaz, Muñoz-Rivas, & Vera-Perea, 2019) [22, 1, 29, 7, 26]. The results suggested that adolescents received various forms of support and positive experiences from family, friends, school, and the living environment. In their familial context, they received warmth, guidance, care, emotional involvement, and responsiveness from their parents. Moreover, they encountered both achievement pressure and social support from their family and friends. In the school environment, they experienced satisfaction through social support from teachers and classmates, reflecting a positive school climate with strong teacher-student relationships, supportive peer interactions, and meaningful academic engagement. These aspects collectively contributed to the well-being and life satisfaction of the school-going adolescents in the South 24 Parganas district.

It is seen in Tables 5.1 and 5.2(a) that self-satisfaction scores were the lowest values among other domains of life satisfaction. It was said that school-going adolescents were relatively less self-satisfied than in other aspects of life. The findings regarding self-satisfaction in the present study might be justified by prior research (Huebner, Gilman, & Laughlin, 1999; Hofer, & Chasiotis, 2003; Leung, McBride-Chang, & Lai, 2004; Park and Huebner, 2005; Suldo & Huebner, 2006; Danielsen, Samdal, Hetland, & Wold, 2009) [19, 15, 24, 28, 7]. The results suggested that, on average, school-going adolescents experienced slightly high levels of

academic competence, self-efficacy, expectations, a sense of indebtedness toward parents, and personal academic goals, values, and aspirations.

The overall results suggested that, on average, school-going adolescents exhibited overall high satisfaction across various dimensions of their lives, consistent with findings from prior studies (Char, Adhikari, & Mahata, 2017; Das, Adhikari, & Bhattacharya, 2020; Char, Karmakar, Saha & Adhikari, 2023) [6, 8, 5]. The studies by Char *et al.* (2017, 2023) [5-6] concluded that, on average, adolescents in the Purulia district expressed high life satisfaction. Similarly, Das, Adhikari, and Bhattacharya (2020) [8] found that female learners in West Bengal, as a whole, derived high satisfaction from their lives.

The results from Table 2 (a) revealed that both male and female school-going adolescents displayed high mean scores for self-concept across five facets, and the mean scores for overall self-concept were high, with females scoring higher than males. The results from Table 2 (b) revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, with females surpassing males, in facets including family, friends, school, self, and overall life satisfaction. Hence Hypothesis (ii) was rejected. However, no statistically significant difference was observed between the male and female groups in the facet of the living environment.

From the results of the present study, it can be said that the school attendance rate of girls is higher than that of boys. Village girls in different parts of South 24 Parganas have to participate in household work with their mothers. Girls are neglected more than boys in the family. However, students who attend school regularly have higher school-life satisfaction, as well as higher family satisfaction with their parents. And girls get more satisfaction from school teachers due to their studies in school.

7. Conclusion

From the results and subsequent discussions of the Descriptive Presentation of the present study, it was concluded that, on average, school-going adolescents in the South 24 Parganas District experienced high life satisfaction across all facets as well as in multidimensional students' life satisfaction as a whole.

Similarly, from the results and subsequent discussions of Gender-wise Comparative Analysis of the present study, it might be concluded that on average, female school-going adolescents expressed significantly higher life satisfaction in the dimensions of family, friends, school, self, and overall composite multidimensional students' life satisfaction compared to the male school-going adolescents.

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