

## **ROLE STRAIN AND SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN EKITI STATE**

**BY**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to examine the role strain and social connectedness and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students in Ekiti State. Descriptive research design of ex-post- facto type was used in the study. 354 university undergraduate students (respondents) were selected randomly from 2 universities (Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and Federal University, Oye-Ekiti) in Ekiti State. The respondents were measured with validated scale of 0.89 reliability coefficient and the data obtained was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical analysis. Two research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that there was significant relationship between role strain and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students ( $r = .746$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and there was significant relationship between social connectedness and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students ( $r = .654$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). In view of these findings, the study recommended that school counsellors should intensify their effort to organize seminars/conferences on the implications of these factors (e.g role strain and social connectedness and others) on the academic performance among university undergraduate students.*

**Keywords: Role strain, Social connectedness, Life satisfaction and University undergraduate students**

### **Introduction**

University is a stressful time for many students to go through as they experience and attempt to process new educational environments as well as social situations. Even those who have already been through school for their undergraduate degree and are now returning for their master's degree suffer from stress. The very nature of university and the university lifestyle often causes depression in many students (Liu & LaRose, 2008). The workload that comes along with university as well as other individual roles can cause students a great deal of distress. Previous research reveals that most students have reported experiencing high amounts of academic stress in university. Most frequently, this stress is found in examination preparation and taking of examinations. This also takes into effect grade competition that is often found in higher level classes such as graduate school and the large amount of information that they must process in a limited amount of time (Misra & Castillo, 2004).

Studies also indicate that there is a nationwide increase in the level of stress in university students. As stressors accumulate, the individual's ability to cope with stress can be overwhelmed. This effect may deplete the student's physical or psychological resources, causing physical illness to soon follow. It is not uncommon to find university students who are afflicted with a persistent lack of energy, loss of appetite, frequent headaches, or gastrointestinal problems (Muraina and Yusuf, 2019). Life satisfaction has been a topic of study by many researchers in the past few

decades. The recent focus of life satisfaction research has been when and why people are satisfied with their life, and what processes are influencing their life satisfaction (Liu & Larose, 2008; Muraina and Yusuf, 2019). All researchers have a slightly different version of the definition of life satisfaction, but essentially they all state that life satisfaction is a person's cognitive evaluation of his or her quality of life as a whole, or within specific life domains (Paolini, Yanez, & Kelly, 2006). Life satisfaction, along with negative and positive effects, is viewed as being components of the broader construct of subjective well-being.

The term subjective wellbeing is defined as the individual's current evaluation of his or her happiness. Because subjective wellbeing is an evaluation of a person's happiness at any certain time in an individual's life, satisfaction can fluctuate substantially over time depending on their current level of happiness (Liu & Larose, 2008). Since happiness, quality of life, satisfaction with life, and life satisfaction are terms used when talking about subjective wellbeing, in this research the terms will be synonymous. Life satisfaction is based on essentially what a person believes their life should be in relation to what it truly is (Paolini, Yanez, & Kelly, 2006). When people believe that their life should be of a certain way their expectations rise. When their life does not live up to their expectations, they experience a drop in life satisfaction. Past research has shown that if a person maintains positive levels of life satisfaction it is crucial for normal life adaptation. If you fall into negative levels of life satisfaction there is an increased risk for maladaptive life outcomes such as physical or psychological illness (Liu & Larose, 2008; Muraina and Yusuf, 2019).

Life satisfaction is dependent on a number of life domains such as age, gender, socio-economic status, student status, job status, family, and others. Each domain has a large effect on an individual's life satisfaction. Domains create roles that an individual participates in, and when one is participating in multiple roles it is likely that a decrease in life satisfaction will occur. Although much research has been done on the different causes of positive or negative life satisfaction, rarely has research been done on the subject pool of university undergraduate students in Nigeria (Adams, King & King, 1996). The stresses of life that undergraduate and graduate university undergraduate students face can at times be overwhelming, and that in turn may affect the student's quality of life and satisfaction with life.

The demands that institutions places on students, along with their other life demands are what could possibly diminish a person's quality of life. Every student, regardless of their graduate or undergraduate status, has other roles or responsibilities in life, and their complete focus cannot be on school alone (Adewuyi and Muraina, 2019; Muraina and Yusuf, 2019). These multiple roles that students participate in make it difficult for individuals to accomplish their goals and be happy or satisfied doing it. It is important to look at exactly what factors in student's lives are affecting their happiness and life satisfaction so that perhaps it will be possible to see what is impacting the students' life satisfaction level. Conversations with graduate students have brought about the idea that perhaps they are not as satisfied with their lives as they were while in undergraduate studies. Previous literature reveals that there has not been much research done on the topic of life satisfaction differences in undergraduate students as opposed to graduate students (Adewuyi and Muraina, 2019; Kitsantas, Gilligan, & Kamata, 2003). For the previously mentioned reasons, it seemed necessary to further research causation of this issue.

Life satisfaction or quality of life refers to an individual's subjective evaluation to the degree in which his or her needs, goals, and wishes have been met and fulfilled. Life satisfaction is viewed as a construct of subjective well-being and happiness (Frisch, Cornell, Villanueva, & Retzlaff, 1992). Previous research has assumed that satisfaction in areas of life that are highly valued have a greater influence on the evaluation of overall life satisfaction than do areas of life that are judged to be of lesser importance (Adewuyi and Muraina, 2019; Muraina and Yusuf, 2019). Education, for those who are in college, is often viewed as an area of great value. Since going to a college is optional, more value is placed on this type of schooling because it is something that the students choose to do. Because of these factors, students are more likely to care about their grades and what happens to them during college, and therefore derive a level of life satisfaction from this. Students who are enrolled in college encompass a large age range.

Due to this factor, many of these students are at various places in their lives. It has become increasingly common for both women and men to balance multiple roles in their lives such as those of a worker, student, spouse, or parent. Because of these multiple roles, one may experience a high level of role salience for a combination of these roles (Perrone & Civiletto, 2004). Approximately one half of all married women are also employed, revealing that they are combining their family role along with their role as an employee (DiBenedetto & Tittle, 1990). The number of these women who are also enrolled in school is unknown, but there are many women enrolled in college who take on the role of student, employee, mother, and parent. Any student who participates in more than one life role at a time is apt to feel the stress of role strain. One factor that can be connected to a decrease in life satisfaction is role commitment and its relation to multiple life roles by one person (Perrone & Civiletto, 2004).

Role strain can be defined as the feeling of stress that can result when there are competing and excessive demands placed on someone from their multiple life roles. When one experiences high work, home, or family salience, whether it is from school or from a place of employment, there is more likely to be role strain (Perrone and Civiletto, 2004). Life role salience is based on three aspects: participation, commitment, and value expectation. Participation refers to the amount of time a person spends in their role. Commitment refers to the importance of the role on the person's self-concept. Value expectation addresses how well the individual is able to express their personal values in the role (Adewuyi and Muraina, 2019). Role strain has also been linked to negative outcomes in life such as psychological distress, decreased quality of life, and decreased quality of relationships. If a person perceives themselves as being able to cope well with all of their different roles they are more likely to lessen their feelings of role strain and increase their life satisfaction (Perrone & Civiletto, 2004). However, if they let the feeling of being overwhelmed by their roles take over, they will decrease their life satisfaction and increase strain.

Social connectedness is necessary for individuals to have in order to maintain their life satisfaction. In relation to students, because the workload that schools demand is so high it reduces one's ability to be able to interact meaningfully with others despite limited time frames. Happiness and life satisfaction are strongly related to social connectedness. It has been found that the support or rejection of a social network is likely to have a very large impact on life satisfaction (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1986). Social networks provide the necessary social support that

individuals need in multiple aspects of their lives. Social support has been defined as a flow of communication between people involving emotional concern, caring, and information as well as instrumental help. Social support provides a buffer to stress and can help reduce the draining aspects of an active life style (Bailey & Miller, 1998; Muraina and Yusuf, 2019). A topic that is relatively new to the research in life satisfaction is the internet and its effect on the amount of social connectedness that individuals have with each other. People in the civic generation were closer to those around them because they did not have the technology that we have now. They lacked the ability to go on the computer and email someone or leave them a message on a social networking site. They were forced to talk to people face to face or even actually speak to them on the phone rather than text messaging them. Increased social connectedness made people feel closer to each other.

Current methods of communication limit social connectedness and lack the important aspect of emotional interaction. Some research does show that the internet is beneficial for life satisfaction in some. Liu & Larose (2008) say that online chatting, games, and social networking sites can distract people from ruminating on un-pleasurable happenings and help them build pleasurable moods. Within groups of university undergraduate students, the internet can facilitate and maintain social relationships that contribute positively to their quality of life.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate role strain and social connectedness and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students in Ekiti State. Specifically, other purposes of the study include to;

1. Examine significant relationship between role strain and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students
2. Investigate significant relationship between social connectedness and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between role strain and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students
2. There is no significant relationship between social connectedness and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students

### **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive design of *ex-post- facto type*. Such an approach does not involve the manipulation of variables in the study. It is therefore, after the fact study. It's neither adds to nor subtracts from the existing fact. However, it is carefully observe and record information as it naturally occurred at the time the study was conducted. The population for the study was all university undergraduate students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used in this study. The first stage involved randomly selection of 2 universities (Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and Federal University, Oye-Ekiti) in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The second stage deals with the selection of 3 Faculties in each selected universities through random sampling method. In each randomly selected faculty, 3 Departments were chosen. However, in each departments, 20 university undergraduate students were selected in the third stage through

balloting. On the whole, total number of university undergraduate students (participants) selected for this study was 360. However, these students consist of both male and female.

### **Instrumentations**

#### **Social Connectedness Scale (SCS)**

Social connectedness scale developed by Perrone & Civileto (2004) was used to assess the generalized control expectancies of the participants on social connectedness. The scale consists of 20 items used to cover the purpose of the scale and response options range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree. In terms of reliability, internal consistency of the scale was reported as .79; split-half reliability was reported as ranging from .65 to .79, and test-retest reliability was reported as ranging from .50 to .85.

#### **Role Strain Scale (RSS)**

The instrument consists of items measuring role strain among university undergraduate students. The items were drawn from role strain scale developed by Bailey & Miller (1998). The scale was adapted to measure the role strain level among university undergraduate students. The scale consists of 18 items used to cover the purpose of the scale and response options range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree. The instrument yielded an alpha value of 0.81.

#### **Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS)**

The instrument consists of items measuring life satisfaction among university undergraduate students. The items were drawn from life satisfaction scale developed by Zullig, Huebner, Gilman, Patton & Murray (2005). The scale was adapted to measure the life satisfaction level among university undergraduate students. The scale consists of 22 items used to cover the purpose of the scale and response options range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree. The instrument yielded an alpha value of 0.87. In order to measure the extent to which the instrument have been able to achieve their aims, the process of content validity was employed by cross-examination and verification. The knowledge gained from other investigation, literature review, theoretical framework and research method helped immediately to validate contents of the instruments. In addition, a more practical avenue of validity explored included consultation within and outside the department of the researcher. These provided the opportunity to check and test the items as the work progressed. In addition, the researcher extended the frontier consultation to lecturers including the researchers' supervisor for necessary critic and suggestions for amendment on the draft of the research instrument. Consequently, a number of items in the questionnaire were amended. Only those items left are relevant and valid constituting the contents of the questionnaire.

The test re-test reliability co-efficient was used for the study. The instruments were pre-test on 20 respondents which were not included in the scope of the study to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. After the pre-test, the instruments were scrutinized and necessary modifications were made before final administration. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was determined yielding 0.89. The instruments were administered to the respondents on the day approved by the school authorities for the exercise. The researcher was assisted by 3 research assistants in administration and collection of the instruments. In each of selected school, the administration and collection of instruments were done on the same day of administration. Out of 360 questionnaires distributed only 354 were properly filled and used for data analysis. Pearson

Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical analysis of SPSS was used to analyse the data so as to establish the relationship among the independent variables and the dependent variable.

## Results

The study investigated into role strain and social connectedness and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students in Ekiti State. Two research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between role strain and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students**

**Table 1: Significant relationship between role strain and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students**

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	N	r	P	Remark
Role strain	38.16	15.72					
Life Satisfaction	41.58	23.16	352	354	.746**	.001	Significant

The table 1 above showed that there was significant relationship between role strain and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students ( $r = .746$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This means that role strain has significant influence on life satisfaction among university undergraduate students

**Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between social connectedness and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students**

**Table 2: Significant relationship between social connectedness and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students**

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	N	r	P	Remark
Social Connectedness	36.81	13.02					
Life satisfaction	41.58	23.16	352	354	.654**	.001	Significant

The table 2 above showed that there was significant relationship between social connectedness and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students ( $r = .654$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This means that social connectedness has significant influence on life satisfaction among university undergraduate students.

## Discussion of Findings

The result of the first research hypothesis revealed that there was significant relationship between role strain and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students. This means that role strain has significant influence on life satisfaction among university undergraduate students. This corroborates the finding of Perrone and Civileto (2004) who found that when one experiences high work, home, or family salience, whether it be from school or from a place of employment, there is more likely to be role strain. Life role salience is based on three aspects: participation, commitment, and value expectation. Participation refers to the amount of time a person spends in their role. Commitment refers to the importance of the role on the person's self-concept. Value expectation addresses how well the individual is able to express their personal values in the role (Adewuyi and Muraina, 2019). However, if they let the feeling of being overwhelmed by their roles take over, they will decrease their life satisfaction and increase strain. Role strain has also been linked to negative outcomes in life such as psychological distress, decreased quality of life,

and decreased quality of relationships. If a person perceives themselves as being able to cope well with all of their different roles they are more likely to lessen their feelings of role strain and increase their life satisfaction (Perrone & Civileto, 2004).

The result of the second research hypothesis revealed that there was significant relationship between social connectedness and life satisfaction among university undergraduate students. This means that social connectedness has significant influence on life satisfaction among university undergraduate students. This is in relation with the finding of Hirsch and Rapkin (1986) who found that support or rejection of a social network is likely to have a very large impact on life satisfaction. Social networks provide the necessary social support that individuals need in multiple aspects of their lives. Social support has been defined as a flow of communication between people involving emotional concern, caring, and information as well as instrumental help. Research shows that social support helps to contribute to one's overall life satisfaction. Social support provides a buffer to stress and can help reduce the draining aspects of an active life style (Bailey & Miller, 1998; Muraina and Yusuf, 2019). A topic that is relatively new to the research in life satisfaction is the internet and its effect on the amount of social connectedness that individuals have with each other. People in the civic generation were closer to those around them because they did not have the technology that we have now.

### **Recommendations**

1. The university management should be enlightened on how to reduce the role strain of the students through well-defined activities in the university academic calendar, this will help in improving the life satisfaction of students in the university.
2. Parents/guardians are to be encouraged to increase the level of social connectedness of the students through constant monitoring of the students, this will help in enhancing the level of life satisfaction of students in the university.
3. School counsellors should intensify their effort to organize seminars/conferences on the implications of these factors (e.g role strain and social connectedness and others) on the life satisfaction among university undergraduate students in the school.
4. Students are to be encouraged on how to improve on their level of social connectedness; this is because social connectedness has significant influence on the life satisfaction among university undergraduate students in the school.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, persistent low life satisfaction among Nigerian university undergraduate students due to some factors such role strain and social connectedness among others should not continue indefinitely. Role strain and social connectedness were found to be eminent factors which contributes or influences the level of life satisfaction among university undergraduate students. There is hope that with the improvement of role strain and social connectedness, the situation can be changed for the better. The study discovered that high role strain and poor social connectedness influence significantly the life satisfaction among university undergraduate students.

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