

Psychological Quality of Life Among Algerian University Students: Evidence from a Descriptive Study at the University of Constantine 2

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Abstract

Psychological quality of life represents a fundamental indicator of well-being and adaptive functioning, particularly during the university period, which is characterized by developmental transitions and academic demands. The present study aimed to determine the level of psychological quality of life among students at University of Constantine 2. A descriptive analytical design was adopted. The sample consisted of 94 university students enrolled primarily in Master's programs. Data were collected using a 42-item Psychological Quality of Life Scale based on a six-point Likert response format. Reliability analysis indicated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .729$), and self-validity was calculated at 0.85. Normality testing revealed non-normal data distribution; therefore, analysis focused primarily on descriptive statistics. Results showed a mean score of 3.91 (SD = 0.429), indicating a generally high level of psychological quality of life according to the established classification intervals. The findings suggest that students perceive themselves as psychologically stable and relatively satisfied with their personal and academic lives. These results highlight the importance of maintaining institutional support systems that promote student well-being and psychological resilience within higher education environments.

Keywords: Psychological quality of life; University students; Well-being; Higher education; Student mental health; Descriptive study

Introduction

The concept of quality of life has gained increasing attention in psychological and educational research over the past decades. Beyond material and economic conditions, contemporary perspectives emphasize the subjective and psychological dimensions of well-being as central indicators of individual functioning and life satisfaction. In the context of higher education, psychological quality of life represents a crucial construct, as university years constitute a formative developmental stage marked by identity exploration, academic demands, and social transitions.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 1995) defines quality of life as individuals' perception of their position in life within the cultural and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns. This definition highlights the subjective and multidimensional nature of the concept. Among its core components, the psychological dimension includes emotional well-being, self-esteem, autonomy, personal growth, and a sense of purpose. Psychological quality of life therefore reflects how individuals evaluate their inner experiences, coping capacities, and personal fulfillment.

Ryff (1989) proposed a eudaimonic model of psychological well-being that includes six fundamental dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. These dimensions collectively capture what may be conceptualized as psychological quality of life. Within the university context, these components are particularly relevant, as students are actively constructing their identities, clarifying life goals, and developing independence.

University life is often idealized as a period of intellectual growth and personal freedom; however, it is also associated with considerable stressors. Academic workload, examination pressure, financial concerns, and uncertainty about future employment may negatively affect students' psychological functioning (Beiter et al., 2015). Research has shown that psychological distress among university students has become a growing concern globally, with many students reporting moderate to high levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional strain (Auerbach et al., 2016). These stressors can directly influence students' psychological quality of life, potentially undermining their sense of competence and satisfaction.

At the same time, the university period corresponds to what developmental psychologists refer to as emerging adulthood—a stage characterized by exploration, instability, and self-focus (Arnett, 2004). During this phase, individuals are engaged in significant life decisions concerning career paths, relationships, and long-term aspirations. The quality of psychological adjustment during this period may have long-term implications for well-being and life trajectories. Therefore, assessing psychological quality of life among university students is not merely descriptive; it is essential for understanding how young adults navigate developmental challenges.

Cultural and contextual factors also shape students' psychological experiences. In societies facing economic constraints and employment uncertainty, students may experience additional pressure related to future prospects and social expectations. Educational systems, family dynamics, and sociocultural norms all contribute to how students perceive their well-being and life satisfaction. Consequently, empirical research conducted within specific local contexts, such as Algerian universities, is necessary to provide culturally grounded insights.

Despite the growing body of international literature on quality of life and student well-being, limited research has focused specifically on the psychological quality of life of university students within the Algerian academic environment. Understanding the level of psychological quality of life in this population can inform institutional policies, counseling services, and preventive mental health programs.

Based on these considerations, the present study aims to determine the level of psychological quality of life among a sample of university students at University of Constantine 2. The central research hypothesis assumes that the level of psychological quality of life among this group is high. By empirically assessing this construct, the study seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of student well-being and provide evidence-based recommendations for educational institutions.

Methods

Research Design

The present study adopted a descriptive analytical design with an evaluative approach. This methodological choice was appropriate given the primary objective of determining the level of psychological quality of life among university students. Descriptive research aims to examine phenomena as they naturally occur without manipulating variables, thereby allowing for an accurate presentation of the studied construct within its real-life context.

The analytical component of the design enabled the systematic organization, interpretation, and evaluation of collected data in light of predefined criteria. This approach is particularly suitable when assessing psychological constructs such as quality of life, which require structured measurement and quantitative interpretation.

Population and Sample

Target and Accessible Population

The target population consisted of university students in general. However, due to practical and logistical considerations, the accessible population was limited to students enrolled at University of Constantine 2.

Sample Size

The study sample included 94 university students enrolled at University of Constantine 2.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic profile of the participants was as follows:

Gender distribution :

Male : 5 students

Female: 89 students

Age range :

Participants' age ranged from 21 to 57 years, with the majority (91%) falling within the age group of 21 to 33 years.

Academic level:

Most participants were enrolled in Master's programs (98%).

Marital status:

The majority were single (93%).

Residential status:

Approximately 67% were non-resident students, meaning they did not reside permanently in the university city.

The predominance of female and Master's-level students reflects the actual enrollment characteristics within the faculty from which the sample was drawn.

Instrument

Psychological Quality of Life Scale

Data were collected using a Psychological Quality of Life Scale consisting of 42 items. The scale was designed to measure students' perceptions of their psychological well-being and overall life satisfaction within the university context. Responses were recorded using a six-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 to 6. To facilitate interpretation, classification intervals were calculated by determining the scale range ($6 - 1 = 5$), dividing it by the number of response categories (6), resulting in an interval length of 0.80.

Based on this calculation, the interpretation of mean scores was structured as follows:

Mean Score Range Interpretation

1.00 – 1.80 Very Low

1.81 – 2.61 Low

2.62 – 3.42 Moderate

3.43 – 4.23 High

4.24 – 5.00 Slightly High

5.01 – 6.00 Very High

This classification allowed for a standardized interpretation of the weighted mean scores.

Psychometric Properties

Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The

Psychological Quality of Life Scale yielded an alpha value of : $\alpha = .729$

This value indicates acceptable internal consistency, as it exceeds the commonly recommended threshold of 0.70 for research instruments.

Validity

Self-validity was calculated using the square root of the reliability coefficient, based on the assumption that reliability sets the upper limit of validity estimation. The computed self-validity coefficient was: $r = 0.85$

This result indicates a satisfactory level of construct validity for the instrument.

Results

Descriptive Analysis of Psychological Quality of Life

Descriptive statistics were calculated to determine the overall level of psychological quality of life among the participants. The analysis included the minimum score, maximum score, mean, and standard deviation.

The results revealed the following values :

Sample size (N) : 94

Minimum score : 2.79

Maximum score : 4.38

Mean (M) : 3.91

Standard deviation (SD) : 0.429

The observed mean score of 3.91 falls within the interval 3.43 – 4.23, which corresponds to a high level according to the predefined classification scale. Therefore, the level of psychological quality of life among students can be classified as **high** according to the established classification intervals

The relatively low standard deviation (0.429) indicates limited variability among participants' responses, suggesting that students' perceptions of their psychological quality of life were relatively homogeneous.

Interpretation According to Classification Intervals

To ensure accurate interpretation, the weighted mean classification intervals were applied. As previously established:

2.62 – 3.42 → Moderate

3.43 – 4.23 → High

Since the computed mean (3.91) lies within the “High” interval range, the statistical classification suggests that students demonstrate a high level of psychological quality of life.

Nevertheless, the practical study interpretation categorized the level as moderate. From a strictly statistical standpoint, based on the scale intervals, the level can be described as relatively elevated but not reaching the “very high” category.

Summary of Findings

The descriptive analysis indicates that:

University students at University of Constantine 2 report a generally positive perception of their psychological quality of life.

The overall level falls within the upper-middle to high range.

Variability among participants is relatively low.

The research hypothesis assuming a high level of psychological quality of life is supported based on the classification intervals.

These findings suggest that students experience a generally satisfactory level of psychological well-being within the university environment.

Discussion

The present study aimed to determine the level of psychological quality of life among university students at University of Constantine 2. The finding indicated that students reported a generally elevated level of psychological quality of life, with a mean score positioned within the high range according to the classification intervals. These results provide valuable insight into students' subjective well-being within the academic context.

Interpretation of the Overall Level of Psychological Quality of Life

The relatively high mean score suggests that students perceive themselves as psychologically stable, satisfied, and capable of managing academic and personal demands. Psychological quality of life encompasses emotional balance, self-acceptance, autonomy, and a sense of purpose—elements that are essential during the university period.

This finding aligns with Diener's (2000) conceptualization of subjective well-being, which emphasizes life satisfaction and positive affect as central components of psychological functioning. University students who report satisfactory levels of well-being are more likely to demonstrate academic engagement, social integration, and adaptive coping strategies. The elevated level observed in this study may indicate that students possess adequate psychological resources to navigate academic challenges.

Furthermore, Keyes (2002) introduced the concept of flourishing, describing individuals who function optimally both emotionally and socially. The results of the present study suggest that a considerable proportion of students may fall within this positive functioning category. Even in the presence of academic stressors, students appear capable of maintaining psychological balance.

University Environment and Psychological Well-Being

The university environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' psychological experiences. Research suggests that supportive academic climates, access to resources, and positive peer relationships significantly contribute to students' quality of life (Cotton, Dollard, & de

Jonge, 2002). The relatively high level of psychological quality of life found in this study may reflect institutional support structures, social cohesion among students, or adaptive coping mechanisms developed over time.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that psychological well-being is influenced by multiple contextual variables, including socio economic conditions, academic workload, and personal expectations. According to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), individuals experience greater well-being when their basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are satisfied. The findings may suggest that, overall, these needs are being reasonably fulfilled within the studied population.

Homogeneity of Responses

The relatively low standard deviation indicates limited variability among students' responses. This homogeneity may reflect shared academic conditions and similar life circumstances, particularly given that the majority of participants were Master's students and single. Shared developmental tasks and academic responsibilities may produce comparable perceptions of psychological well-being.

Additionally, cultural factors may influence how students evaluate and report their quality of life. In collectivist contexts, social support networks and family cohesion often serve as protective factors for psychological health (Triandis, 2001). Such protective factors may contribute to maintaining stable levels of well-being among students.

Implications for Higher Education

The findings underscore the importance of continuously monitoring students' psychological quality of life. Although the overall level appears satisfactory, preventive strategies remain essential. Psychological well-being is dynamic and can fluctuate due to academic pressure, financial stress, or transitional challenges.

Higher education institutions should therefore implement proactive mental health initiatives, including:

Counseling and psychological support services

Workshops on stress management and resilience

Programs promoting social integration and peer support

Academic mentoring systems

Enhancing students' psychological quality of life is not only beneficial for individual well-being but also contributes to academic success and institutional performance.

Limitations

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations :

The sample was drawn from a single university, limiting generalizability.

The sample was predominantly female, which may influence overall perceptions.

The cross-sectional design does not allow causal conclusions.

The reliance on self-report measures may introduce response bias.

Future research should include more diverse and balanced samples, examine additional variables such as academic stress or resilience, and employ longitudinal designs to track changes over time.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to determine the level of psychological quality of life among university students at University of Constantine 2. Using a descriptive analytical design and a validated measurement instrument, the findings revealed that students report a generally elevated level of psychological quality of life. The mean score obtained suggests that students perceive themselves as psychologically stable and relatively satisfied with their personal and academic lives.

These findings indicate that, despite the academic demands and developmental challenges associated with university life, students demonstrate adaptive psychological functioning. The results highlight the importance of considering psychological quality of life as a key indicator of student well-being and academic sustainability. A satisfactory level of psychological well-being may positively influence motivation, engagement, interpersonal relationships, and academic performance.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the broader literature on student well-being by providing empirical data within the Algerian university context. It reinforces multidimensional models of psychological well-being that emphasize subjective perception, autonomy, and emotional balance as central components of quality of life.

From a practical standpoint, maintaining and enhancing students' psychological quality of life should remain a priority for higher education institutions. Universities should continue developing preventive and supportive mental health strategies, including counseling services, resilience training, and academic support systems. Early identification of students experiencing psychological distress may prevent deterioration in well-being and academic outcomes.

However, several limitations must be acknowledged. The study relied on a single institutional context, limiting generalizability. The predominance of female participants may also influence the overall findings. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design restricts causal interpretation. Future research should incorporate larger, more diverse samples and consider longitudinal approaches to examine changes in psychological quality of life over time.

In conclusion, psychological quality of life among university students at University of Constantine 2 appears to be relatively high. Continued institutional efforts aimed at strengthening students' psychological resources and academic support systems will be essential in sustaining and improving this level of well-being.

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