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Relationship of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Aspirations with Quality of Life of University Students: Mediating Role of Perceived Academic Stress

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The present study investigated the mediating role of perceived academic stress between life aspirations and quality of life (QoL) among university undergraduates in a purposive sample of 300 undergraduate students from the University of Sargodha with an age range of 18-25 years. The Aspiration Index (Kaser & Ryan, 1996), Quality of Life Scale (Burakhardt et al., 1989), and Undergraduate Stressor Questionnaire (Spiridon & Evangelia, 2015) were administered for the focal variables and demographic variables gender, family system, and residential background were assessed against them. Path analysis revealed the positive and negative direct effects of extrinsic life aspirations on perceived academic stress and quality of life, respectively, whereas intrinsic life aspirations showed a reverse pattern of direct effects. Moreover, intrinsic life aspirations had a positive indirect effect and extrinsic life aspirations have a negative indirect effect on QoL through perceived academics. Significant gender differences were observed as men reported significantly higher levels of intrinsic life aspirations, significantly lower perceived academic stress, and significantly higher QoL compared to women. Family system and residential background did not associate with focal variables

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significantly. Implications of the study and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: intrinsic life aspirations, extrinsic life aspirations, quality of life, perceived academic stress

Self-determination theory (SDT, Ryan & Deci, 2000) explains motivation when people make choices without external influence or inference. The theory focuses on the degree to which behavior is self-motivated and self-determined, and provides a conceptual framework to explain both antecedents and consequent factors behind personal motivation. This theory proposes humans repeatedly show effort, activities, and commitments based on *inherent growth tendencies* that are based on human nature. Life aspiration is an important construct of SDT and the present study is an empirical endeavor of examining its influence on perceived academic stress and quality of life (QoL) in university undergraduates.

Aspirations are hopes and ambitions towards goals, where individuals devote time, effort, or money to achieve them; they are visions or plans that lead to commitments towards achieving goals (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). When people are directed towards goals such as self-acceptance, affiliation, community feeling, and physical fitness, SDT suggests people have a higher level of well-being (Schmuck et al., 2000).

The theory proposes two types of aspirations, *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*. Intrinsic aspiration is naturally consistent with human needs, like the expansion of self-awareness resulting in more meaningful connections with others and personal growth, etc. Such aspirations satisfy basic psychological needs and provide an experience of happiness and well-being (Kaser & Ryan, 2001). Extrinsic aspirations, on the other hand, are influenced by external factors, like obtaining rewards, getting positive evaluations from others, etc. (Deci & Ryan, 2008) but such aspirations are not aligned with innate needs that are part of human nature. Culture plays a definitive role in shaping these extrinsic aspirations, which are fulfilled by securing high social status or appreciation and positive feedback from others (Ryan & Deci, 2011).

Life aspirations play an instrumental role in shaping one's QoL. QoL is one's perception of one's life in the context of one's culture and value system, one's goals, expectations, and standards. It is an individual's perception of his/her life in the context of the culture and value systems in which he/she lives (Burckhardt et al., 1989). Research has yielded empirical evidence for the differential influence of intrinsic and extrinsic life aspirations on well-being and QoL (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Intrinsic life aspirations relative to extrinsic life aspirations are more strongly associated with well-being and QoL (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004). Deci and Ryan (2008) believe that intrinsic life aspirations are instrumental in satisfying people's basic psychological needs such as autonomy, relatedness, and competence; however, when these basic psychological needs have been thwarted, people tend to adopt extrinsic life aspirations that may help them acquire external indicators of worth rather than the intrinsic feelings of worth spawned by need satisfaction. Therefore, extrinsic aspirations may be conceived as need substitutes because they do not directly satiate any of the basic psychological needs; rather they may offer some compensation for the true need satisfaction. Therefore, we expect that people having a high degree of intrinsic life aspirations may enjoy better QoL as compared to people who espouse a high degree of extrinsic life aspirations.

Life aspirations influence perceived stress, where stress refers to an aversive affective state that is characterized by predictable cognitive, biochemical, behavioral, and physiological changes that may either alter the stressful event or may accommodate or adapt to its negative consequences (Dougall & Baum, 2011). Perceived academic stress has been studied extensively as an important factor in education, where students can experience mental health issues ending in failure and poor academic grades (Gall et al., 2000). Undergraduate students face different academic stressors in their educational life including examinations, a heavy load of academic work, and a high difficulty level of academic work (Evans & Kelly, 2004). In addition, the pressure of getting better grades, fear of failing (Burnard, Rahim, Hayes & Edwards, 2007), time pressure (Jones & Johnston, 2000), long hours of study (Beck & Srivastava, 1991), and the relationship with academic staffs (Evans & Kelly, 2004) are some other sources of perceived academic stress.

Literature Review

Extrinsic and intrinsic life aspirations have different patterns of associations with QoL and well-being (Romero et al., 2012). Intrinsic life aspirations lead to satisfaction of basic psychological needs resulting in improved quality of life; extrinsic life aspirations, on the other hand, are the need substitutes when basic psychological needs are not met (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Therefore, intrinsic life aspirations have a stronger influence on QoL. Numerous pieces of research on extrinsic and intrinsic aspirations have demonstrated that intrinsic aspirations are positively associated with different indicators of well-being whereas extrinsic aspirations have not been associated with well-being and sometimes they have been negatively associated with various measures of wellbeing (Niemiec et al., 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Romero et al., 2012; Bradshaw et al., 2018a).

People with intrinsic goals have higher life satisfaction and happiness, higher levels of self-actualization and vitality, higher self-esteem and open-mindedness, and fewer experiences of depression, anxiety, and general health problems (Ingrid et al., 2009; Kaser & Ryan, 2001). Previous studies indicate extrinsic life aspirations are associated with lower well-being and lower level of happiness. Romero et al. (2012) also reported that extrinsic aspirations are feebly associated with wellbeing. Roche and Harr (2013) found that all extrinsic aspirations were significantly and positively correlated with job burnout, while all the intrinsic aspirations were significantly and negatively correlated with it. Therefore, we may assume that people with intrinsic life aspirations are less vulnerable to experiencing stress, which in turn may improve their QoL. In contrast, people with extrinsic life aspirations are more likely to experience stress, which may impoverish their QoL.

Qualitative and quantitative research suggests stressors such as lack of sense of control, uncertainty, and financial worry/strain reduces QoL (Kosta & Jachimowicz, 2010; Mo & Winnie, 2010). Interpersonal stress related to worrying, coping, and relationships (Bramston et al., 2005) also results in lower QoL. A systematic review of the literature indicated a strong negative association between perceived academic stress and the QoL of university students (Ribeiro et al., 2018), and that university students generally experience a higher degree of perceived academic stress

(Cotton, Dollard, & Jonge, 2002). Students who had a higher level of stress had a lower sense of well-being, satisfaction, and their performance in school was also debilitated (Cotton, et al., 2002), which resulted in poor QoL. A couple of recent indigenous studies have also found that stress has a negative influence on life satisfaction (Afridi & Maqsood, 2019) and psychological well-being (Zaheer & Khan, 2022) of university students.

Rationale

Literature is aligned with SDT and purposes compared to extrinsic life aspirations, intrinsic life aspirations bring better psychological wellbeing (Romero et al. 2012) and improved QoL (Ingrid et al., 2009). However, SDT does not explain the mechanism through which life aspirations differentially influence QoL and wellbeing. The present study will address this gap by linking life aspiration with QoL mediated by perceived academic stress among university students. Testing this hypothesis will contribute to expanding the literature by identifying the mechanism that may explain the dynamic interplay between life aspirations and QoL and may answer the enduring question that how different life aspirations have a differential influence on people's quality of life. Thus, the primary objective of the present study is to examine the mediating role of perceived academic stress between life aspirations and quality of life among university students.

The present study assumes that students with extrinsic life aspirations are more prone to perceive a higher degree of perceived academic stress, which in turn is negatively associated with their QoL. Extrinsic life aspirations as discussed above are negatively associated with QoL. Intrinsic life aspirations should be negatively associated with perceived academic stress, which in turn is positively related to QoL (see Figure 1). To the best of the author's knowledge, no published research has investigated perceived academic stress as the mediator between life aspirations and QoL among university students. Therefore, we hope that the findings of the present study not only fortify the support for the SDT but they may also explain the mechanism through which different types of life aspirations influence QoL in students.

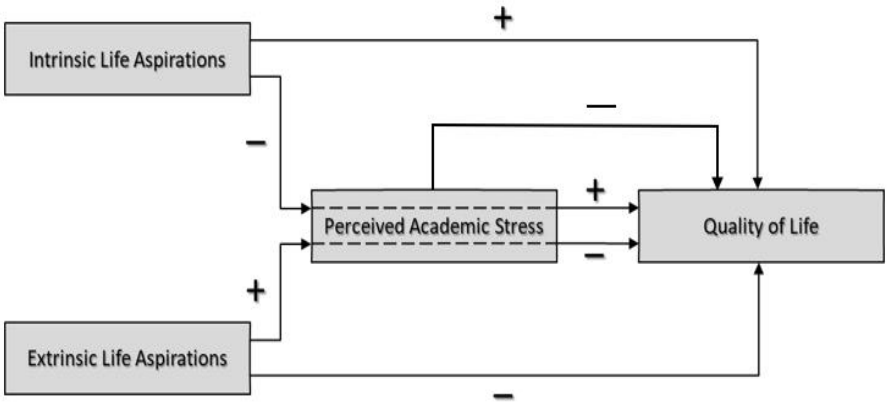
Hypotheses

In view of the pertinent literature, the present study formulates the following hypotheses:

1. Intrinsic aspiration will have a positive relationship with quality of life and a negative relationship with perceived academic stress.
2. Extrinsic aspiration will have a negative relationship with quality of life and a positive relationship with perceived academic stress.
3. Perceived academic stress will mediate the positive relationship between intrinsic aspirations and quality of life.
4. Perceived academic stress will mediate the negative relationship between extrinsic aspirations and quality of life.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Present Study



Method

Sample

A purposive sample (N = 300) of students from the University of Sargodha belonging to different academic disciplines was taken, where men (n = 116) were fewer than women (n = 184). The age of the participants ranged from 18-25 years (M = 21.36, SD = 1.22). The students of undergraduate were part of the research with an age range of 18-25

years. Data was collected from fifth or higher semester undergraduate students, where undergraduate students from first to fourth semesters and post-graduate students were excluded (see Table 1 for demographic details of the sample). The data were collected online by sharing the google form in classes of students who met the inclusion/exclusion criteria of the study.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Demographics	*n (%)*
Gender	
Men	116 (38.67)
Women	184 (31.33)
Family System	
Joint	108 (36.00)
Nuclear	192 (64.00)
Residential Background	
Rural	140 (46.67)
Urban	160 (53.33)

Instruments

Aspiration Index (AI). Kaser and Ryan (1996) developed AI, which consists of 35 items rated on a 7-point rating format, ranging from 1 = not at all to 7 = extremely important. The index assessed the three extrinsic (wealth, fame, image) and four intrinsic (personal growth, community, affiliation, health) aspirations. The first 15 items measured extrinsic life aspirations and the last 20 items measured intrinsic life aspirations with no reverse items. The total scores on extrinsic and intrinsic life aspirations were computed by adding all the items of each subscale. The internal consistency for extrinsic life aspirations was (Cronbach α = .81) and for intrinsic life aspirations was (Cronbach α = .79) and total scale (Cronbach α = .78) (Kaser & Ryan, 1996).

Quality of Life Scale (QoLS). Burakhardt et al. (1989) developed QoLS to assess the QoL, as a unidimensional construct that consisted of

16 items. Each item was measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = terrible to 7 = delighted. The score was obtained by adding up the responses. The high level of score indicated a high QoL. There were no reverse items on the scale. According to Burakhardt et al. (1989), the scale was internally consistent (Cronbach α = .82 to .92) and had moderate to high test-retest reliability over 3-weeks in stable chronic illness groups (*r* = .78 to .84).

Undergraduate Stressor Questionnaire. The present study used Undergraduate Stressor Questionnaire (Spiridon & Evangelia, 2015) for measuring perceived academic stress in university students. The scale comprised 29 items and was scored on a 4-point Likert type scale with 1 = "Not stressful" and 4 = "Very stressful". There were no reverse-coded items on the scale. All items were summed up to constitute the total score on perceived academic stress, where higher scores represented greater perceived academic stress. The authors report an impressive alpha coefficient of reliability (α = .90) for the data collected (see Table 2).

Research Design

The present study employed a cross-sectional design and owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown of the educational institutions, students could not be tested face-to-face and were contacted online via a google form to complete the above scales. Written informed consents for participation in the present study were sought from all the participants and were ensured that the information would remain strictly confidential and anonymous. The participants were requested to read each item carefully and give their honest responses to each statement. They were appreciated and thanked for their participation in the study. The study was approved by the Ethical Committee of the Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, and the participants were treated strictly in accordance with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017).

Results

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of skew and kurtosis of the acceptable data, and did not violate the assumptions of the distribution. Reliabilities (Cronbach alpha) of all scales were high.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics, Coefficients of Reliability, and Interscale Correlations

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Range		*Sk*	*Ku*	α	ILA	ELA	PAS	QoL
			Actual	Potential							
ILA	108.98	18.49	24-105	15-105	-.93	.09	.93		.38*	-.28*	.44*
ELA	62.90	14.04	50-140	20-140	.05	.42	.88			.24*	-.06
PAS	62.70	18.93	17-105	0-116	-.16	-.66	.90				-.43*
QoL	82.38	13.26	37-111	16-112	-.67	.41	.89				

Note. Sk = coefficient of skewness, Ku = coefficient of kurtosis, ILA = intrinsic life aspirations, ELA = extrinsic life aspirations, PAS = perceived academic stress, QoL = quality of life
**p < .001*

Table 2 shows the Pearson correlation among the focal variables of the study. Intrinsic life aspiration was positively related to extrinsic life aspirations and QoL and negatively related to perceived academic stress. On the other hand, extrinsic life aspirations were positively related to perceived academic stress and negatively related to the quality of life, though non-significant. Perceived academic stress was significantly negatively associated with QoL.

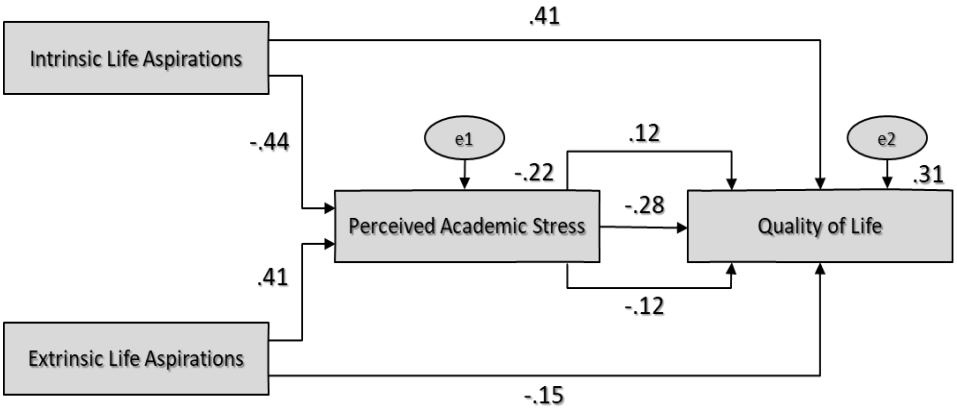
Table 3
Standardized Direct and Indirect Effects

			95% CI	
Paths	B	*p*	LL	UL
ILA ⇨ PAS	-.44	.001	-.54	-.33
ELA ⇨ PAS	.41	.001	.30	.52
PAS ⇨ QoL	-.28	.001	-.41	-.14
ILA ⇨ QoL	.41	.001	.28	.55
ELA ⇨ QoL	-.15	.020	-.26	-.02
ILA ⇨ PAS ⇨ QoL	.12	.001	.06	.19
ELA ⇨ PAS ⇨ QoL	-.12	.001	-.19	-.06

Note. ILA = Intrinsic Life Aspiration, ELA = Extrinsic Life Aspiration, PAS = Perceived Academic Stress, Qol = Quality of Life

Table 3 presents standardized path coefficients of the direct and indirect effects based on a 95% bias-corrected maximum likelihood with 2000 bootstrapped samples [chi-square test (χ^2 = 0.36, *df* = 3, *p* = .95)].

Figure 2
Path Model of the Study



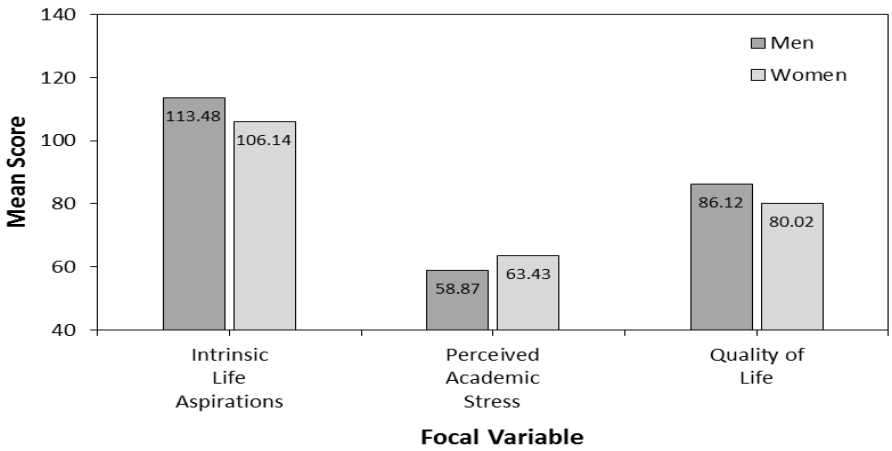
As shown in Figure 2, the model did fit well with the data; indices showed strong evidence for the model, where CFI, GFI, AGFI, and NFI were greater than .95, and RMSEA was less than .05 with p_{close} = .98. Intrinsic life aspirations were significantly positively associated with QoL

and significantly negatively with perceived academic stress. Perceived academic stress-mediated significantly positively between intrinsic life aspirations and QoL. Extrinsic life aspirations on the other hand were significantly negatively associated with QoL and significantly positively with perceived academic stress. Perceived academic stress-mediated significantly negatively between extrinsic life aspirations and QoL. Age was taken as a control variable and it had no direct effect on QoL (not included in Figure 2).

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was carried out on three demographic variables; gender, family system and residential background. A significant main effect, Wilk's $\lambda = .93$, $F(4, 289) = 5.89$, $p < .000$ of gender was found, however all other variables, their two-way and three-way interactions were not significant. Post-hoc univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed men (M = 113.48, SD = 1.69) had significantly [$F(1, 292) = 7.73$, $p < .01$] higher intrinsic life aspiration than women (M = 106.14, SD = 1.53); Men (M = 58.87, SD = 1.29 were significantly [$F(1, 292) = 15.45$, $p < .001$] lower than women (M = 63.43, SD = 1.37) for perceived academic stress; and men (M = 86.12, SD = 1.22) were significantly [$F(1, 292) = 13.72$, $p < .001$] higher in QoL than women (M = 80.02, SD = 1.11), for a graph of means see Figure 3. No significant differences were found in men and women for extrinsic life aspirations.

Figure 3

Gender Differences in the Focal Variables



Discussion

This study examined the differential effects of extrinsic and intrinsic life aspirations on QoL mediated by perceived academic stress among university undergraduates and examined the influence of various demographic factors like gender, family system, and residential background on the core constructs.

Aligned with the SDT, the first hypothesis was confirmed; intrinsic life aspirations were positively related to QoL and negatively related to perceived academic stress (see Table 3, Figure 2). As SDT postulates intrinsic aspirations are aligned with greater harmony with human nature and inborn growth propensities that foster intrinsic life aspirations and push individuals to deeper self-awareness and more meaningful associations with others and the community (Weinstein et al., 2012). Intrinsic goals are inherently satisfying to peruse because they are likely to satisfy the innate psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, competence, and growth. In addition, SDT states that intrinsic aspirations are more congruent with well-being and healthy development than extrinsic ones and hence are more likely to support satisfaction of the psychological needs (Ryan et al., 2008), which results in improved QoL and lower perceived stress. This line of reasoning is also supported by Sheldon (2002) who observed that intrinsic goals promote well-being because they help satisfy basic psychological needs that may lead to improved quality of life. Similarly, Lee et al. (2019) asserted that fostering intrinsic life aspirations were essential for well-being.

The second hypothesis of the present study proposed that extrinsic life aspirations would be positively related to perceived academic stress and negatively related to the quality of life. This hypothesis has also been supported by our findings. Table 3 depicted that extrinsic life aspirations had significant direct effects on both quality of life and perceived academic stress in the hypothesized direction. The SDT proposes that extrinsic life aspirations are not harmonious with positive human nature because they are constituted by culture and are generally satisfied by attaining high social status or positive appraisal from others. Extrinsic aspirations generally reflect a sense of insecurity about one's self and they may lead

one to engage in more stressful, ego-involved, and controlled behavior, which does not satisfy one's needs (Kaser & Ryan, 2001) resulting in a high degree of stress and compromised quality of life. Pertinent literature supports this line of reasoning as Ingrid et al. (2009) found that a person's extrinsic life goals were associated with lower well-being and they would have a lower level of happiness.

The third hypothesis of the present study postulated that perceived academic stress would mediate between intrinsic life aspirations and quality of life. Findings of path analysis supported this hypothesis as we found that high levels of intrinsic life aspiration led to a lowered perception of perceived academic stress, which in turn led to improved quality of life (see Table 3). The self-determination theory assumes that intrinsic life aspirations are instrumental in the fulfillment of basic psychological needs, which lower stress and result in improved mental health and quality of life (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic aspirations are inherent and are not dependent on any external factor. Therefore, they constitute more stable sources of motivation for a person to perform the task in order to satisfy his/her need for autonomy and competence rather than to attain any reward or to avoid any punishment. Pertinent empirical literature also supports this finding of the present study. For instance, Kaser and Ryan (2001) found that people with a high degree of intrinsic aspirations enjoy a better quality of life because they were more satisfied with their lives, had higher levels of self-esteem and vitality, were open-minded, and were happier. They further asserted that such people were less likely to experience mental and general health issues. Recently, Hope et al. (2019) found that intrinsic life aspirations led to greater satisfaction of basic psychological needs, improved well-being, and autonomous goal orientation over time. Similarly, Ling et al. (2016) found that students with low levels of intrinsic aspirations experienced a greater degree of depression after facing social and perceived academic stressors and concluded that intrinsic life goals might act as protective factors against depression while facing daily social and academic hassles.

Our final hypothesis proposed the mediating role of perceived academic stress between extrinsic life aspirations and quality of life. This hypothesis has also been supported by the results of the present study. We

found that a high degree of extrinsic life aspirations led to a heightened perception of perceived academic stress that resulted in a poor quality of life. According to SDT, in extrinsic self-regulation, the source behind motivation is external. An individual may be motivated because of the external factor; the external factor may be some sort of reward i.e.; an individual may study to get good grades in order to get the reward from his parents. The individual may be motivated to avoid the punishment; the individual may study to avoid failure. If the reward is removed then an individual's source of motivation may also vanish, and continued administration of punishment may lead to certain problematic behavior resulting in compromised mental health (Ryan et al., 2008). This finding is also in line with the pertinent literature as Kaser and Ryan (2002) found that having relatively strong aspirations for extrinsic outcomes was negatively associated with mental health indicators; whereas, placing more importance on intrinsic aspirations was found to be positively associated with mental health indicators.

Our findings indicated that men were higher in their intrinsic life aspirations than women, men enjoyed a better QoL than women; men had lower perceived academic stress than women. No differences were revealed in the family system, residential background, or interactions. Western literature suggests that women experience low levels of basic psychological need satisfaction which could make them more vulnerable to poor psychological health (Gómez-Baya et al., 2018). Therefore, women tend to adopt extrinsic life aspirations as SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000) suggests that thwarting the need satisfaction leads to extrinsic aspirations as a need substitute. In our society, women have to confront more challenges in their academic lives, like being harassed on campus, getting permission from parents to stay out for extended periods to complete their class projects, etc. This makes them dependent on elder members of their families. In addition, female students have to look after their homes helping their mothers with many chores in and around the house; if these female students are married in-laws do not allow them to acquire regular careers. All these challenges make women more vulnerable to perceived academic stress and poor QoL. Literature also suggests similar gender

differences in perceived academic stress (Graves et al., 2021; Madhyastha et al., 2014) and quality of life (Chraifa & Dumitru, 2015).

Conclusion

Since the proposed hypotheses were supported, we find explanations of these hypotheses well-founded in SDT. Intrinsic life aspirations play a pivotal role in satiating one's basic psychological needs, therefore, individuals with strong intrinsic life aspirations are likely to perceive less academic stress, which in turn boosts their quality of life. On the other hand, for those whose basic psychological needs have been thwarted, extrinsic life aspirations may act as need substitutes resulting in more perceived academic stress, which may compromise their quality of life. The current study also elucidated that women experienced lower levels of intrinsic life aspirations, poorer quality of life, and a higher degree of perceived academic stress as compared to men.

Implications

The findings of the current research yield salient implications for both theory expansion and practice of educational psychology. Typically, our society cultivates the mindset that one should study for a higher degree in a discipline that pleases one's significant others in order to capture a good occupational status in society. Our findings regarding the influence of life aspirations on academic outcomes suggest that this mindset needs to be changed if we aspire that our students to do exceptionally well in their academics. They should be taught that getting an education is not a means of earning a respectful livelihood or occupying some enviable socioeconomic status in society, rather it is an essential need of any civilized culture because it leads to better self-understanding, a peculiar lifestyle, and a healthy outlook towards life. Therefore, education should be sought for the sole purpose of education, and mastering the knowledge should yield an intrinsically satisfying and pleasant state of being. Thus, rearing today's children with intrinsic life aspirations and the provision of open choice for their academic and occupational careers would surely return us successful leaders of tomorrow. The parents, teachers, and developmental psychologists should focus on fostering intrinsic

aspirations in students so that they may lead a fuller and more productive life.

Limitations and Recommendations

Like all empirical investigations, the current research has its limitations, for instance, the analyses were correlational and do not relate how focal variables were causally connected, or if other factors affected them. For establishing the causal relationships variables of interest need to be manipulated and for focal variables as dependent variables of this study. Future studies could be longitudinal to shed light on the ontological aspects of life inspiration, perceived academic stress, and QoL.

The sample of the current research was restricted to students of the University of Sargodha, therefore, the generalization of the results of this research warrants caution since the sample of the present study was not truly representative of the university undergraduate population of Pakistan. Future research should employ a large sample size for maximizing the external validity of the findings and should incorporate more representative samples of students from different universities so that stronger evidence for the generalizability of the research finding can be assured. In addition, participants from other occupational groups across diverse organizations should be samples for improving generalizability.

The use of self-report measures for all the focal variables of the present study might have introduced the common method bias. Common method bias may occur when all constructs in research are measured by the same response method. This may introduce common variance beyond the true covariance between the constructs that may result in inflated correlations. The multi-method approach should be used in future studies to control the potential common method bias.

An evolving technique in stress research is to use experience sampling methodology (ESM), which requires participants to respond to the questions pertaining to their feelings and coping methods about the stressful conditions or events they encounter in their natural academic contexts repeatedly in real-time. This methodology holds considerable weight for stress research and future studies based on ESM may unravel certain impenetrable issues relating to perceived academic stressors.

There were nominal age differences in the participants of the present study resulting in little variance in the age (*SD* = .75 years). That's why age did not covary with QoL and failed to explain any variance in QoL as a control variable in the path analysis.

Lastly, there are numerous paths for future research pertaining to the findings of the present study. As life aspirations turned out to be important predictors of perceived academic stress and quality of life, future research should also explore the potential role of other relevant constructs. For instance, the potential mediating role of study engagement should be examined between life aspirations and the academic performance of university undergraduates.

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