

The Role of Optimism and Social Support in Improving the Life Satisfaction of Migrant Students

Rizky Deviana Utami¹, Zahra Ramadhan²

Pamulang University

Rizkydevianautami@gmail.com¹, Zahraramdhan343@gmail.com²

Abstract

This study looks at how optimism and social support help improve the happiness of students who are studying away from their hometowns. It uses a quantitative approach to look at the connections between these factors. The sample included 100 students who are currently studying outside their hometowns, and they were chosen through purposeful sampling. To gather data, an online survey was used, which included well-tested tools: the Life Orientation Test-Revised to measure optimism, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support to check for social support, and the Satisfaction With Life Scale to evaluate life satisfaction. The data was analyzed using multiple regression with SPSS version 25 to see how the variables are connected, both directly and through their interaction. The results show that both optimism and social support have a strong positive effect on the life satisfaction of students who move away. Also, these factors work together to improve happiness even more. These findings back up the broaden-and-build theory, which says that having positive mental resources and good social connections helps people feel better. This study suggests that schools and government officials should create programs that build optimism and improve social support to help international students adjust and feel better in their new environment.

Keywords:

optimism, social support, life satisfaction, overseas students

Introduction

Living away from their hometowns, students face various psychological and social challenges that impact their overall happiness and satisfaction with life. Life satisfaction, an essential aspect of subjective well-being, is shaped by multiple internal and external influences. Optimism and social support are two key factors that assist students in overcoming stress and adjusting to new surroundings. Optimism, which involves expecting positive outcomes, enhances mental resilience and health, whereas social support includes emotional and practical aid from relatives and friends that cushions life's hardships and boosts life satisfaction. While many studies have explored these aspects separately, little research has examined how optimism and social support together affect the life satisfaction of students living away from home. This study aims to address that gap by exploring the combined effect of these variables. The findings could inform the design of strategies and support systems to

improve the well-being and successful adjustment of students living outside their hometowns.

Theoretical Framework

Life satisfaction constitutes a core dimension of subjective well-being, extensively explored within psychological and social disciplines. It represents an individual's overall cognitive judgment of their life quality (Diener et al., 2018). Among influential factors, optimism and social support are identified as significant positive predictors of life satisfaction, particularly in populations experiencing major transitions like students living away from their hometowns.

Optimism is characterized by the expectation of positive future outcomes (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Individuals who are optimistic often exhibit enhanced emotional regulation and use effective coping mechanisms when confronted with difficulties (Karademas, 2006), which contributes to improved psychological health and life satisfaction (Chang & Sanna, 2001; Diener et al., 2003). For students residing far from home, optimism supports resilience, enabling successful adaptation to cultural adjustments and academic stresses (Potoboda & Kristianingsih, 2023).

Social support includes the emotional, informational, and practical aid provided by family, friends, and peers. It acts as a buffer against stress and promotes psychological resilience (Feeney & Collins, 2014). The beneficial effect of social support on life satisfaction is well-established; it directly enhances well-being and indirectly through the promotion of hope, optimism, and resilience (Pilram et al., 2020; Rye et al., 2020). For overseas students, robust social networks help reduce homesickness and feelings of isolation, thereby elevating overall life satisfaction (Angriani & Kristianingsih, 2023).

Although individual effects of optimism and social support on life satisfaction have been studied, less attention has been given to their combined impact on students living away from home. This study addresses this gap by exploring the interactive role of optimism and social support in fostering life satisfaction in this group.

The hypotheses derived from this framework are:

H1: Optimism positively correlates with life satisfaction in students living outside their hometown.

H2: Social support positively correlates with life satisfaction in students living outside their hometown.

H3: Optimism and social support together have synergistic effects enhancing life satisfaction among these students.

The framework is informed by Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory, which posits that positive psychological resources, such as optimism, broaden cognitive and behavioral repertoires and help build durable personal resources, including social support networks (Fredrickson, 2001). Through testing these hypotheses, the study aims to advance understanding of how optimism and social support jointly influence

life satisfaction of students living away from home, guiding psychological practices and support program development.

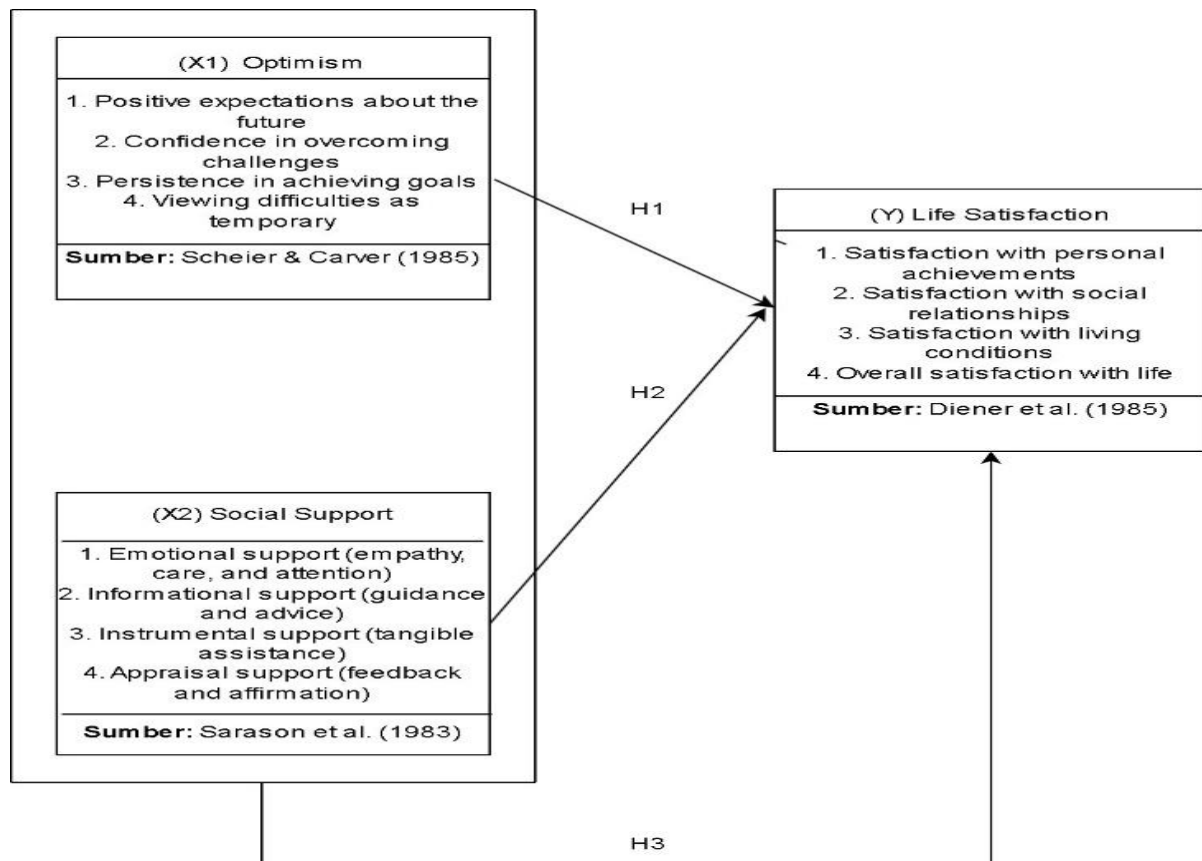


Figure 1 Framework

Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design to look at how optimism and social support are connected to life satisfaction among migrant students. The group of people who took part in the study includes all migrant students who are currently studying for higher education in Indonesia. The sample was chosen through purposive sampling, which means students who had been studying for at least one year and met the criteria to be considered active migrants were included, leading to a total of about 100 participants.

To gather information, an online survey was used through Google Forms.

Three psychological tools were used: the Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R) to check levels of optimism, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) to assess social support, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) to measure life satisfaction.

All these tools were translated into Indonesian and checked to make sure they were accurate and reliable before being used.

The collected data were analyzed using multiple regression in SPSS version 25.

This helped determine how much optimism and social support, together or separately, influence the life satisfaction of migrant students.

Results

This part of the study clearly shows the results in a well-organized way based on the goals set at the beginning. The data was analyzed using SPSS, which is a program used for statistical work. The study looked at how optimism (X_1) and social support (X_2) affect life satisfaction (Y), and it involved 100 students from the Management Study Program at Pamulang University. Using SPSS helped the researchers get more accurate and unbiased results. The data analysis involved several statistical methods such as regression, multiple regression, t-test, F-test, and the coefficient of determination (R^2). All these steps started with checking some basic assumptions, like normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation. To make sure the data met the requirements for a linear regression model, the variables were transformed using logarithms ($LN X_1$ for leadership skills and $LN X_2$ for self-confidence) to ensure the data was normally distributed.

Table 1. Test Table-t

| | | Coefficients ^a | | | | | | |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 6.795 | 2.474 | | 2.747 | .007 | | |
| | X1 | .244 | .099 | .191 | 2.474 | .015 | .523 | 1.912 |
| | X2 | .618 | .069 | .688 | 8.910 | .000 | .523 | 1.912 |

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Based on the table above, the constant value is 6,795 and the regression coefficient for the personality variable (X_1) is 0,244 so the regression equation is:

$$Y = 6,795 + 0.244X_1 + 0,618X_2$$

The t-test results show that both independent variables have a positive and significant effect on life satisfaction. The optimism variable (X_1) has a t value of 2.474 and A significance level of 0.015 is less than 0.05., while social support (X_2) has a t value of 8.910 and A significance level of 0.00 is less than 0.05, This means that as students have higher levels of optimism and social support, their life satisfaction also increases.

Table 2. Test Table F

ANOVA^a

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 3409.697 | 2 | 1704.848 | 110.859 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 1522.470 | 99 | 15.378 | | |
| | Total | 4932.167 | 101 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

The F test results show an F value of 110.859 and a p value that is less than 0.001, which is lower than 0.05. This means that optimism (X1) and social support (X2) together have a meaningful effect on life satisfaction (Y) for migrant students. Because of this, the regression model is seen as significant.

Table 3. Coefficient of determination

Model Summary^b

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | .831 ^a | .691 | .685 | 3.922 | 1.832 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

b. Dependent Variable: Y

The R² test results show a value of 0.691, meaning that 69.1% of the changes in life satisfaction among migrant students are explained by optimism and social support. The other 30.9% is due to factors not included in this model. This shows that both optimism and social support have a strong and significant effect on life satisfaction.

This means that when migrant students have more optimism and better social support, they tend to be happier with their lives. The study shows that psychological and social factors play a key role in helping migrant students feel satisfied with their lives.

Discussion

The study shows that both optimism and having good social support help migrant students feel more satisfied with their lives. The t-test results show that optimism has a big and meaningful effect on life satisfaction ($t = 2.474$, $Sig = 0.015$). This means students who are more optimistic are more likely to say they are happy with their lives. These results match earlier research by Karademas (2006) and Chang & Sanna (2001), who found that optimism helps people deal with tough situations better and improves their mental health.

Social support also has a strong and important effect on life satisfaction ($t = 8.910$, $Sig = 0.000$).

This aligns with the work of Feeney & Collins (2014) and Pilram et al. (2020), who found that support from friends, family, and others makes people feel more connected and safe, which increases their happiness. For migrant students, social support helps

them manage feelings of homesickness and stress from a new culture, giving them emotional support and helping them feel better overall.

The F test results ($F = 110.859$, $Sig < 0.001$) show that optimism and social support together have a significant effect on life satisfaction. This suggests that these two factors work together, supporting and strengthening each other's influence. Optimism helps students better understand and use social support, which then leads to greater happiness. These findings align with Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory (2001), which explains that positive emotions expand a person's thinking and actions, helping them build lasting social and mental resources.

An R^2 value of 0.691 means that 69.1% of the changes in life satisfaction can be explained by optimism and social support together. The remaining 30.9% may be due to other factors not included in this study, like academic performance, financial situation, or personality. The high R^2 value shows that psychological and social factors play a major role in affecting the well-being of students who live away from home.

These results show how important it is for migrant students to build up good mental strengths and strong friendships. Schools and other organizations can help a lot by setting up support groups, buddy programs, and counseling services. These efforts can help students feel more hopeful and connected, which in turn makes them happier and better able to adjust to new places.

Conclusion

This study shows that having a positive outlook and getting support from others has a big impact on how happy students feel when they are studying overseas. Being optimistic helps students handle the challenges of living far from home, making it easier for them to manage stress and feel better. Having a strong support system gives students emotional and practical help, which makes them feel less lonely and more connected, leading to greater happiness. When optimism and support from others work together, they have a much stronger positive effect on how satisfied students are with their lives. These results back up the "broaden-and-build" theory of positive emotions, which says that building positive mental strengths and having a supportive group of people are key to overall well-being. For schools and government officials, this means they should develop programs that help students become more optimistic and create better support networks to help them adjust and feel better. Although optimism and social support explain most of the differences in how satisfied students are with their lives, other factors also play a role and need more research. In the end, both mental and social factors are important areas to focus on when helping international students adjust and feel happy.

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