

# Positive and Negative Affect, Life Satisfaction and Resilience among University Students: A Comparative Study of Day Scholars and Hostellers

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**Abstract:** The intricate web of emotional, social, and academic demands that university students must manage has a big impact on their mental health. Life satisfaction, which is described as an individual's cognitive assessment of overall life quality and resilience the ability to adjust to stress, hardship, and major life transitions successfully, are two important factor that determine students' well-being. The goal of the current study was to investigate and contrast resilience and life satisfaction among undergraduate university students who were day scholars and hostellers. Convenience sampling was used to select 118 undergraduate students from a university in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (59 day-scholars and 59 hostellers). In addition to the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al. 1988) participants also completed two validated measures: the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson 2003) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al. 1985). Data were analyzed using independent samples t-tests and descriptive statistics in a comparative study design.

Life satisfaction ( $t = 0.66$ ,  $p = .512$ ) and resilience ( $t = 1.21$ ,  $p = .227$ ) did not differ statistically significantly between the two residential groups. Life satisfaction and resilience showed a strong and positive correlation ( $r = .52$   $p < .01$ ) despite the lack of group differences highlighting the interdependence of these psychological resources. These results imply that psychological well-being is not significantly influenced by residential status alone. Both living arrangements seem to provide different types of support that are functionally similar. The findings highlight the significance of creating institutional support systems and universal resilience-building programs that benefit all students regardless of their living situation.

**Keywords:** Life-Satisfaction, Resilience, University Students, Residential Status, Day Scholars, Hostellers' Psychological Well-Being.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

A critical stage of growth university life is marked by increased independence increasing academic responsibilities and significant social shifts. In addition to navigating increasingly complicated situations students must concurrently develop peer connections and adjust to new academic obstacles. These conflicting obligations often create serious pressures that might negatively impact psychological health.

A person's cognitive assessment of their overall quality of life is known as life satisfaction, and it is a fundamental component of subjective well-being (Diener et al. 1985). Higher life satisfaction is typically associated with better psychological adaptation, more effective coping strategies, and

improved emotional stability. As a result, life satisfaction is a crucial indicator of mental health and general well-being. Another fundamental concept in positive psychology is resilience, which describes people's ability to flourish in the face of hardship, stress, or difficult situations (Masten 2001). Resilience is essential for university students to handle personal setbacks, social transitions, and academic stress. Students who are resilient are better able to bounce back from setbacks in their studies and keep their composure under constant stress.

One potentially significant contextual factor influencing students' psychological outcomes is residential arrangements. Residents in hostels experience increased independence and social interaction, but they may also experience homesickness, a lack of family support, and challenges adjusting to community

life. On the other hand, day scholars stay in comfortable homes that offer steady familial support and emotional stability.

There is significant theoretical and practical value in examining how residential status affects resilience and life happiness. It adds to the expanding body of research on environmental factors influencing students' psychological well-being and can guide the creation of focused counseling and support programs at universities.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies have looked at the connection between young people's resilience and life satisfaction. Stronger adaptive abilities are linked to higher subjective well-being according to Rani and Midha's (2014) study on humor and resilience among hostellers and day scholars in India which found a positive correlation between resilience and life satisfaction among teenagers. Higher baseline resilience predicts prolonged life satisfaction and psychological stability in demanding academic situations according to longitudinal studies among medical students.

Scholars have also focused on residential arrangements as a contextual factor influencing psychological adjustment. According to Anthony and Mol's (2017) research female hostellers reported greater resilience than their day scholar peers, suggesting that hostel settings may foster hardiness autonomy and problem-solving skills. However prior research by Shah (1989) Gupta (1990) and Sujatha et al. (1993) showed that day scholars outperformed in more general adjustment domains such as emotional, social, and health-related adjustment, which may be related to the ongoing availability of family support.

More recent data points to a convergence of the two groups' psychological outcomes. According to a 2025 study that was published in the International Journal of Indian Psychology, day scholars and hostellers had similar levels of stress, which the authors attributed to better hostel circumstances and the growth of stronger peer support networks. The literature as a whole paints a complex picture showing that neither home arrangement consistently results in better psychological consequences.

### ➤ *Research Gap and Rationale*

Relatively few research have simultaneously investigated life satisfaction and resilience within the same sample of Indian university students using standardized psychometrically validated questionnaires, despite the expanding body of evidence relating residential status to psychological consequences. Comparability was hampered by earlier studies' reliance on general, frequently non-standardized measures of adjustment. Furthermore, previous research frequently treats residence status as a binary predictor without taking into consideration the entire spectrum of psychological tools that students in each group might use.

By comparing resilience (CD-RISC) and life satisfaction (SWLS) in a single undergraduate population, the current study fills these gaps. Its conclusions may improve theoretical knowledge of the social and environmental factors that affect students' well-being and provide administrators and counselors at universities with useful advice for creating focused intervention programs.

### ➤ *Objectives and Hypotheses*

The objective of the present study was to examine life satisfaction and resilience among day scholars and hostellers.

## III. METHOD

### ➤ *Participants*

Convenience sampling, a technique frequently employed in university-based psychological research because of its accessibility and viability, was utilized to select 118 undergraduate students (59 day-scholars and 59 hostellers) from a university in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. The age range of the participants (young adult developmental stage) was 18 to 25. To guarantee representational breadth, both male and female students from a variety of academic fields were included.

### ➤ *Instruments*

To study the objective of the present study following tools were used:

- *Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)*

Developed by Watson et al. (1988) the PANAS consists of 20 items divided into two subscales: Positive Affect (10 items) and Negative Affect (10 items). Participants rate the extent to which they currently experience each emotion on a 5-point scale (1 = *Very Slightly or Not at All* to 5 = *Extremely*). The PANAS has well-established reliability and cross-cultural validity.

- *Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)*

Developed by Diener et al. (1985), the SWLS is a five-item measure of global cognitive life satisfaction rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree*). Higher total scores indicate greater life satisfaction. The SWLS has demonstrated robust reliability ( $\alpha = .87$ ) and validity across diverse populations.

- *Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)*

Developed by Connor and Davidson (2003), the CD-RISC comprises 25 items assessing the ability to cope with stress and adversity. Items are rated on a 5-point scale (0 = *Not True at All* to 4 = *True Nearly All the Time*). Higher scores reflect greater resilience. The scale demonstrates strong psychometric properties in both clinical and non-clinical samples.

➤ *Procedure*

After receiving institutional approval from university authorities, data gathering got underway. Students were approached individually on campus and briefed on the study's purpose. Confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants, voluntary involvement was emphasized and students were told they could leave at any moment without facing any repercussions. Before any data was collected, each participant provided written informed consent.

Two complementary approaches were used to collect data: an online survey conducted using Google Forms and paper-and-pencil questionnaires filled out in person by the researcher. Both involvement and logistical effectiveness were maximized by this hybrid strategy. Each participant finished in 10 to 15 minutes on average.

➤ *Research Design*

To investigate the differences in psychological factors between day scholars and hostellers, a comparative research design was used. The independent grouping variable in this design was residential status (day scholar vs. hosteller), and the psychological variables of interest were those affecting resilience and life satisfaction. In psychology research, this

design is frequently employed to determine whether two or more naturally occurring groups differ significantly from one another.

➤ *Statistical Analysis*

SPSS was used to organize and analyze the collected data. For every variable, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated. The mean life satisfaction, resilience, and affect scores of day scholars and hostellers were compared using independent samples t-tests. To investigate relationships between the research variables, Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated. The statistical significance threshold was established at  $p < .05$ .

**IV. RESULTS**

Descriptive statistics and independent samples t-test findings comparing day scholars and hostellers on life satisfaction (SWLS), resilience (CD-RISC), positive affect (PANAS-PA), and negative affect (PANAS-NA) are shown in Table 1. The current findings are placed within the larger empirical literature in Table 2. The intercorrelation matrix between all research variables is shown in Table 3.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Group Comparisons (N = 118)

Variable	Hostellers M ± SD (n = 59)	Day Scholars M ± SD (n = 59)	t	p	r with Life Satisfaction
Life Satisfaction (SWLS)	20.49 ± 5.77	21.15 ± 5.13	0.66	.512	
Resilience (CD-RISC Total)	50.73 ± 11.94	53.32 ± 11.25	1.21	.227	.52**
Positive Affect (PANAS-PA)	31.95 ± 7.82	31.25 ± 5.57	0.55	.580	.61**
Negative Affect (PANAS-NA)	31.12 ± 6.29	31.14 ± 6.02	0.01	.988	-.48**

Note. SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale; CD-RISC = Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale; PANAS-PA = Positive Affect subscale; PANAS-NA = Negative Affect subscale. \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 2 Comparison of Current Study Findings with Prior Research

Study	Key Finding	Alignment with Current Study	Explanation for Difference
Shah et al. (1989–1993)	Day scholars showed better overall adjustment compared to hostellers.	Partial alignment (directional similarity with life satisfaction).	Earlier studies examined broad adjustment domains; the present study focuses specifically on SWLS and CD-RISC.
Anthony & Mol (2017)	Female hostellers reported higher resilience levels.	No alignment (no significant group difference in resilience found).	Previous research focused on gender differences; the present study included a balanced gender sample.
Rani & Midha (2014)	Positive relationship between resilience and life satisfaction among Indian adolescents.	Strong alignment ( $r = .52$ in current study).	Findings replicate the association between resilience and life satisfaction among university students.

Study	Key Finding	Alignment with Current Study	Explanation for Difference
IJIP (2025)	Similar stress levels observed among hostellers and day scholars.	Strong alignment (similar resilience levels across groups).	Recent studies suggest improved hostel conditions and coping mechanisms among students.

Note. Current study: N = 118 undergraduate students from Lucknow University. SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale; CD-RISC = Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale.

Table 3 Intercorrelation Matrix Among Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Life Satisfaction		.52**	.61**	-.48**
2. Resilience	.52**		.49**	-.41**
3. Positive Affect	.61**	.49**		-.45**
4. Negative Affect	-.48**	-.41**	-.45**	

Note. \*\*p < .01 (two-tailed).

### V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Separate samples On all four of the variables analyzed t-tests showed no statistically significant differences between day scholars and hostellers. H1 was not supported since there was no significant difference in life satisfaction scores between the groups (day scholars: M = 21.15 SD = 5.13; hostellers: M = 20.49 SD = 5.77; t(116) = 0.66 p = .512). H2 was not supported by resilience scores which were comparable across groups (day scholars: M = 53.32 SD = 11.25; hostellers: M = 50.73 SD = 11.94; t(116) = 1.21 p = .227). Additionally there was no difference in positive affect (t = 0.55 p = .580) or negative affect (t = 0.01 p = .988) across the groups.

Life satisfaction and resilience (r = .52 p < .01) life satisfaction and positive affect (r = .61 p < .01) and resilience and positive affect (r = .49 p < .01) all showed significant positive connections according to Pearson correlations. As predicted by theory negative affect was inversely correlated with resilience (r = -.41 p < .01) and life satisfaction (r = -.48 p < .01).

### VI. DISCUSSION

The current study investigated whether undergraduate university students who were day scholars and those who were hostellers had significantly different levels of life satisfaction resilience and affect. The results showed no statistically significant group differences on any variable in contrast to the directional expectations expressed in the study hypotheses. Nonetheless these results have significant theoretical consequences.

Day scholars reported somewhat better life satisfaction (M = 21.15) than hostellers (M = 20.49) but this difference was not statistically significant. According to Shah (1989) Gupta (1990) and Sujatha et al. (1993) this pattern is congruent with the

emotional stability and familial support that modern scholars are believed to gain from staying in their home contexts. But it also implies that hostel residents might make up for it with peer-based social support and the freedom that comes with living in a hostel eventually achieving similar levels of life satisfaction.

It is also interesting that resilience scores are equivalent across groups. The current mixed-gender sample revealed no such difference despite Anthony and Mol's (2017) finding that female hostellers had greater resilience. This is consistent with the stress-inoculation perspective (Meichenbaum 1985) which postulates that people who are exposed to manageable challenges eventually develop better coping mechanisms. This process may happen for day scholars through the prolonged experience of commuting and juggling conflicting demands or for hostellers through adaptation to independent living. The substantial positive correlation between life satisfaction and resilience (r = .52) is further explained by Fredrickson's (2001) Broaden-and-Build Theory: positive emotional states broaden cognitive repertoires and create long-lasting psychological resources resulting in a mutually reinforcing cycle of well-being.

The tripartite structure of subjective well-being proposed by Diener et al. (1985) in which affective experiences and cognitive assessments of life quality constitute separate but related components of well-being is supported by the strong correlation between positive affect and life satisfaction (r = .61) and the inverse relationship between negative affect and life satisfaction (r = -.48).

The shared campus atmosphere may also account for the lack of notable group differences. The same academic pressures lectures and campus social activities are experienced by both day scholars and hostellers. The psychological differentiation

that residential status may ordinarily provide is probably lessened by this overlap in everyday experience.

#### ➤ *Clinical and Institutional Implications*

Campus-wide well-being interventions rather than residentially specialized programs seem most appropriate because both groups showed similar psychological resources. The following evidence-based strategies may be taken into consideration by universities:

- **Resilience Training:** All students, regardless of living situation can participate in structured workshops based on CD-RISC categories (such as mindfulness cognitive restructuring and adaptive coping).
- **Life Satisfaction Programs:** Initiatives including peer interaction and participation (such as student clubs and mentorship programs) that improve subjective well-being and foster social connections.
- **Counseling Services:** To assist students who are having trouble adjusting there are accessible de-stigmatized mental health services such as psychoeducation and voluntary individual counseling.
- **Hostel Environment Enhancement:** To maintain the well-being of resident students, improvements should be made to the hostel's recreational areas, dependable communication systems and peer support groups.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The current study examined resilience and life satisfaction among undergraduates at a university in Lucknow who were day scholars ( $n = 59$ ) and hostellers ( $n = 59$ ). Results from the SWLS and CD-RISC showed that there were no statistically significant differences in resilience or life satisfaction between the two groups ( $p > .05$ ). Resilience and life satisfaction have a strong positive link ( $r = .52$   $p < .01$ ), highlighting the interdependence of these resources in promoting student wellbeing.

These results imply that university students' psychological well-being cannot be well predicted by residential status alone. Whether through peer networks and the experience of independent living (hostellers) or family support (day scholars) both groups seem capable of creating adaptive coping mechanisms that maintain similar levels of resilience and life satisfaction.

The findings are consistent with theoretical frameworks that view resilience as a dynamic context-sensitive process that arises from the interplay between personal characteristics and environmental resources. They emphasize the importance of resilience training life satisfaction programs and easily accessible counseling that serve all students equally regardless

of their living situation as well as institution-wide psychological support activities.

## VIII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

When evaluating these results, it is important to take into account a number of constraints. First, generalizability to larger Indian student populations or to institutions in rural and diverse socioeconomic situations is limited by convenience sampling from a single urban university in Lucknow. External validity would be strengthened with a larger stratified random sample from several institutions. Second, causal inference is not possible due to the cross-sectional design. Examining developmental pathways, such as whether early homesickness predicts resilience growth over time in line with stress-inoculation theory, would be possible with a longitudinal approach that tracks students from dormitory enrollment through graduation. Third, using self-report measures raises the possibility of social desirability bias, especially in light of the stigma associated with mental health disclosure in India. Measurement validity would be improved by adding objective indicators (such as attendance and academic records) to self-reports. Fourth, modest but significant group differences might not have been found due to the study's moderate statistical power (estimated power  $\approx .62$  for the reported effect sizes). Fifth, there was a lack of comprehensive control of potentially significant confounders such as year of study, gender distribution, parental education level, and hostel quality.

Longitudinal designs larger and more geographically diversified samples and mixed-methods approaches (e.g. augmenting questionnaires with qualitative interviews and diary studies) should be used in future research to overcome these constraints. Examining mediating variables including academic stress attachment styles and social support would shed more light on how residential setting affects psychological well-being. Applied relevance for university administrators might also be improved by connecting psychological variables to specific institutional outcomes (GPA retention rates mental health care utilization).

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