

Activity Engagement, and Meaning in Life Satisfaction among young Adults

Abstract

The present research aims to study the relationship between meaningful activity engagement and life satisfaction among young people adults 18 to 25 years. The engaging in meaningful activities provides individual with a sense of purpose and fulfillment which enhance over all life satisfaction. The study follows a descriptive and correlational design to examine how participation in purposeful activities influence well being. The samples 250 contrast non college student from convenient sampling from various education and occupational background in Tamil Nadu. Data collect using the scale are The Engagement Meaning activity engagement and life satisfaction (Diener 1995) were used to measure key variables. Data were collected by using the structured questionnaire and analyzed through SPSS using descriptive statistics Pearson correlation and regression analysis. The results are expected to reveal a significant positive relationship between individual higher meaningful activity engagement will report with greater satisfaction with life. This study highlights the importance of meaningful experience in promote mental well being among contrast young adults.

Keywords : Meaningful activity engagement , life satisfaction , young adults , well being , purpose in life , fulfillment , mental health , correlational study

1. Introduction

In modern society, young adults manage multiple academic, occupational, and social demands that significantly shape their psychological well-being. The transition into adulthood is marked by identity exploration, career preparation, and the search for purpose, often accompanied by heightened stress and uncertainty. Within this context, the manner in which individuals engage in daily activities and develop meaning from them plays a crucial role in determining overall life satisfaction.

Activity engagement refers to the extent to which individuals actively, attentively, and emotionally involve themselves in purposeful activities such as academic work, employment, hobbies, social participation, and personal development. Meaningful engagement is not simply about being occupied but involves psychological presence, intrinsic motivation, and a sense of capability. Individuals who are deeply engaged in activities often experience fulfillment, personal growth, and a stronger sense of control over their lives.

Meaning in life represents the perception that one's life has purpose, coherence, and value. According to Frankl (1963), the pursuit of meaning is a fundamental human motivation, and individuals who perceive their lives as meaningful demonstrate greater resilience and psychological health. Meaning often emerges through sustained engagement in activities that align with personal values, goals, and identity.

Life satisfaction, a component of subjective well-being, refers to an individual's cognitive evaluation of their overall quality of life based on self-defined standards (Diener et al., 1985). Rather than temporary emotions, life satisfaction reflects a global judgment about whether life circumstances meet personal expectations and aspirations.

Research increasingly suggests that these three constructs—activity engagement, meaning in life, and life satisfaction—are closely interconnected. Meaningful engagement in daily activities fosters a stronger sense of purpose, which in turn enhances life satisfaction. Conversely, low engagement or involvement in activities lacking personal significance may result in feelings of emptiness, dissatisfaction, and reduced well-being. Understanding this relationship is essential, particularly among young adults, as this life stage lays the foundation for long-term psychological health and fulfillment

1.1 Background of the Study

Young adulthood is a period of many changes and new responsibilities. During this time, individuals face challenges such as managing studies, planning careers, building relationships, and making important life decisions. The way young adults spend their time and involve themselves in activities can strongly affect their happiness and mental health.

Research in positive psychology over the last ten years shows that being actively involved in activities and finding meaning in life are important for well-being. Seligman's (2011) PERMA model highlights engagement and meaning as two key parts of a happy and fulfilling life. People who are fully involved in activities often experience "flow," a state of complete focus and motivation, which supports personal growth and satisfaction.

Studies also show that individuals who take part in daily activities actively have better mental health, feel less stress, and report higher life satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Ryff & Singer, 2008). Meaningful activities provide structure, help set goals, and allow self-expression, which strengthens a person's sense of self.

Meaning in life is connected to positive outcomes, including higher life satisfaction, optimism, and emotional stability (Steger et al., 2006). People who find purpose in their daily activities cope better with stress and challenges because they see difficulties as meaningful. Life satisfaction depends on both internal factors, like thoughts and feelings, and external experiences, such as daily activities.

Young adults who engage in valued activities and perceive their life as meaningful report greater satisfaction, even during challenges (Diener et al., 2018)

Although research supports these ideas, few studies have examined how activity engagement, meaning in life, and life satisfaction are linked together, especially among young adults in educational or non-clinical settings. Studying these relationships can help promote well-being and life satisfaction in early adulthood.

Life satisfaction depends on both internal factors, like thoughts and feelings, and external experiences, like daily activities and social life. Young adults who take part in activities that they

value and see as meaningful report greater satisfaction with life, even when facing challenges (Diener et al., 2018).

2. Methodology

2.1 Aim

To examine the relationship between meaning activity engagement, and life satisfaction among young adults.

2.2 Objectives

- To assess the levels of activity engagement, meaning in life, and life satisfaction among young adults.
- To examine the relationship between activity engagement and meaning in life.
- To analyze the association between meaning in life and life satisfaction
- To determine whether activity engagement contributes to higher life satisfaction through enhanced meaning in life.

2.3 Hypothesis

- There is a significant positive relationship between activity engagement and meaning in life among young adults.
- Meaning in life is positively associated with life satisfaction
- Higher levels of activity engagement are associated with greater life satisfaction.
- Meaning in life mediates the relationship between activity engagement and life satisfaction.

2.4 Inclusion Criteria

- Young adults aged 18–30 years.
- Individuals currently engaged in academic, occupational, or structured daily activities.
- Participants are able to read and understand English.
- Willingness to provide informed consent.

2.5 Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals diagnosed with severe psychological disorders that may impair self-reporting ability
- Participants are currently undergoing intensive psychiatric treatment.
- Incomplete or inconsistent questionnaire responses.

129 3. Procedure

130 The study was conducted using a structured and systematic procedure to examine the relationship
131 between meaning activity engagement, and life satisfaction among young adults. Prior to data
132 collection, moral approval was obtained from the concerned authority, and informed consent was
133 secured from all participants. Participants were selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
134 Young adults who met the eligibility requirements were approached through educational institutions
135 and online platforms. The purpose of the study was clearly explained, and participants were assured of
136 confidentiality and anonymity. They were informed that participation was voluntary and that they
137 could withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences. Data were collected using
138 standardized self-report questionnaires. Participants were first asked to complete a demographic
139 information sheet, which included details such as age, gender, educational
140 status, and occupation. Following this, the participants were administered the Activity Engagement
141 Scale to assess their level of involvement in daily activities. The Meaning in Life Questionnaire was
142 then used to measure the presence of meaning and purpose in their lives. Finally, the Satisfaction with
143 Life Scale was administered to assess overall life satisfaction. Clear instructions were provided
144 before administering each questionnaire to ensure accurate responses. Participants were encouraged to
145 answer all items honestly and were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaires without any
146 pressure. The entire data collection process was carried out either individually or in small groups in a
147 calm and comfortable environment. After completion, the questionnaires were collected and checked
148 for completeness. Incomplete or inconsistent responses were excluded from the analysis. The
149 collected data were coded and entered into statistical software for analysis. Appropriate statistical
150 techniques were employed to examine the relationships among activity engagement, meaning in life,
151 and life satisfaction.

154 4. Discussion

155 4.1 The Psychological Significance of Activity Engagement in Young Adulthood

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157 The reviewed literature collectively highlights activity engagement as a central
158 psychological factor influencing well-being during young adulthood. This developmental phase is
159 characterized by exploration, identity formation, and the establishment of long-term personal and
160 professional goals. Active engagement in daily activities—such as academic pursuits, employment,
161 creative interests, and social participation—provides young adults with structure, purpose, and a sense
162 of agency. Rather than task completion, engagement involves psychological presence, emotional
163 investment, and intrinsic motivation. Consistent with flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), engaged
164 individuals experience absorption and enjoyment in activities, which enhances competence and self-
165 efficacy. When young adults are deeply involved in meaningful tasks, they are less likely to
166 experience feelings of emptiness or disengagement. Conversely, low engagement may contribute to
167 boredom, lack of direction, and dissatisfaction, especially in environments that fail to support
168 autonomy and personal interests. Thus, activity engagement functions as a foundational mechanism
169 through which young adults regulate emotions and derive fulfillment from everyday experiences.

173 4.2 Meaning in Life as a Cognitive and Emotional Integrator

Meaning in life emerges as a crucial psychological resource that integrates activity engagement with broader life evaluation. Meaning is not experienced in isolation; rather, it develops through sustained involvement in activities that align with personal values, goals, and identity. Engaged activities provide individuals with narratives that help them understand who they are and why their efforts matter. Frankl's (1963) existential framework emphasizes that the presence of meaning enables individuals to endure challenges and maintain psychological stability. The literature suggests that meaning in life acts as a lens through which young adults interpret their experiences. When activities are perceived as meaningful, daily stressors are reframed as purposeful efforts than overwhelming demands. This cognitive reappraisal strengthens emotional resilience and promotes a sense of coherence in life. In contrast, engagement in activities lacking personal significance may fail to generate meaning, leading to feelings of alienation and reduced well-being.

4.3 Life Satisfaction as an Outcome of Meaningful Engagement

Life satisfaction represents a global cognitive judgment about one's life circumstances and achievements. The findings across studies indicate that life satisfaction is strongly influenced by both activity engagement and meaning in life. Young adults who perceive their daily activities as meaningful tend to report higher satisfaction with life, regardless of temporary stress or external challenges. Meaning plays a mediating role in this relationship by transforming engagement into fulfillment. Activity engagement alone may not guarantee life satisfaction if the activities do not align with personal values or aspirations. However, when engagement is accompanied by a sense of meaning, individuals are more likely to evaluate their lives positively. This aligns with Diener et al.'s (1985) conceptualization of life satisfaction as a subjective evaluation based on internal standards rather than objective conditions.

4.4 The Interconnected Cycle of Engagement, Meaning, and Life Satisfaction

The relationship between activity engagement, meaning in life, and life satisfaction can be understood as a dynamic and self-reinforcing cycle. Meaningful engagement enhances a sense of purpose, which increases life satisfaction, and higher life satisfaction, in turn, motivates continued participation in valued activities. This cycle promotes sustained psychological well-being and adaptive functioning among young adults. Disruptions in this cycle—such as disengagement from activities, lack of purpose, or dissatisfaction—may contribute to emotional distress, apathy, and reduced motivation. This is particularly relevant in modern contexts where young adults face academic pressure, career uncertainty, and social comparison. Strengthening engagement and meaning may therefore serve as protective factors against psychological distress and declining well-being.

4.5 Cultural and Developmental Considerations

While the existing literature supports the positive role of engagement and meaning, limited research has examined these constructs within specific cultural and developmental contexts. In collectivist societies, activity engagement may be influenced by familial expectations and social roles, which can either enhance or restrict the development of personal meaning. Young adults may engage in activities due to external pressure rather than intrinsic interest, potentially weakening the link

between engagement and life satisfaction. Most studies focus on Western populations, leaving a gap in understanding how cultural values shape the experience of meaning and satisfaction. Future research should explore culturally grounded interpretations of engagement and meaning to develop contextually relevant interventions that support young adults' well-being.

4.6 Need for integrative and Meaning centered Approaches

The discussion highlights the need for integrative approaches that address both behavioral engagement and cognitive meaning-making processes. Interventions focusing solely on increasing activity levels may be insufficient unless they also help individuals reflect on the purpose and value of their activities. Meaning-centered counseling, strengths-based approaches, and value clarification strategies may enhance the effectiveness of engagement-based interventions.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that activity engagement, meaning in life, and life satisfaction are closely connected aspects of young adults' well-being. When individuals actively engage in activities that are meaningful and aligned with their personal values, they are more likely to experience a stronger sense of purpose and satisfaction with life. Meaning in life plays an important role in transforming everyday activities into fulfilling experiences, thereby enhancing overall life satisfaction. Promoting meaningful engagement can therefore support positive psychological functioning and long-term well-being among young adults.

6. Implications

- Encouraging meaningful activity engagement among young adults can enhance their sense of purpose and overall life satisfaction.
- Educational institutions can design academic and co-curricular programs that promote active involvement and personal value alignment.
- Mental health professionals can incorporate meaning-centered and engagement-based interventions in counseling and well-being programs.
- Career guidance services can help young adults identify activities and career paths that align with their interests and values, fostering long-term satisfaction.
- Community and youth development initiatives can create structured opportunities for engagement that support psychological well-being.

7. Limitations

- The study relies on self-report measures, which may be influenced by response bias or social desirability.
- The cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships among the variables.
- The sample may be limited to a specific age group or educational background, restricting generalizability.

- Cultural and contextual factors influencing activity engagement and meaning in life were not examined in depth.
- Individual differences such as personality traits, socioeconomic status, and life circumstances were not controlled, which may have influenced the results.

8. Reference

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