



A Study on the Relation between Lifestyle and Mental Health among University Students(Case Study: Mohr PNU)

Mahdi Amiri^{1*} Parvane Dudman² and Aliakbar Ataiffar³

^{1*} Faculty member of Department of Educational Sciences PNU, PO Box: 19395-3697, Tehran, Iran

² Faculty member of Department of Educational Sciences PNU, PO Box: 19395-3697, Tehran, Iran.

³Master degree Education Management PNU.

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ABSTRACT

The following research tries to study the relation between lifestyle and mental health among Mohr PNU students in academic year of 2013-2014. The statistical society to this research included all student of this university with a total of 320. The statistical sample included 175 (88 male and 8 female) students who were selected through stratified random sampling equally from 7 fields of study including: educational sciences, accounting, geography, economic sciences, social sciences, law, and management. Research tools used in this research included Goldberg and Hillier's General Health Questionnaires (GHQ-28) with Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.89, researcher-made lifestyle questionnaire with Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.79 and formal validity. The main results to the research suggest that there is a significant relation between lifestyle and mental health among university students. Independent groups T-test results indicate there is no significant difference on gender. ANOVA showed a significant difference among fields of study on the relation between lifestyle and mental health among university students. Stepwise Regression analysis results indicated that during four steps, components of nutrition, exercise, disease prevention and environmental health, had the highest correlation coefficient with students' mental health and predicted 81.7 percent of variance in the dependent variable.

KEYWORDS: : lifestyle, mental health, university students, PNU.

1. INTRODUCTION

Providing and improving public health are among the main advancements of societies [1]. In the past, health experts would emphasize on treating diseases. However, today's world focuses on prevention and providing health through improving lifestyle and omitting factors which have negative impacts on human health[2]. Findings suggest that 53 percent of mortalities is related to the individuals' lifestyle [3]. Regardless of different views and definitions on mental health, it is clear that there are various factors which could directly or indirectly affect individuals' mental health in positive or negative ways. Lifestyle is one factor among them which has a significant impact on various activities and ultimately on individuals' mental and physical health [4]. Researches have indicated that lifestyles are in relation with adults' mental and physical health. Teaching the proper lifestyle for transition to pass through each life stage and subsequently, choosing proper methods for nutrition, exercise and sleep and relaxation and other factors, immunize males against psychological and social damages and leads to strengthening their relationships with their spouses and families [5].

Lifestyle is considered to have various meanings ranging from type, method, shaping or designing an entity, designing or behaving in a way which is considered as proper and suitable, especially in social behavior [6]. a method in which a something us said or done, such as speech style or writing style [7] and method of doing something, especially a way which emphasizes on a certain attitude or certain era [8]. Lifestyle is a part of life which is actually realized and includes a complete range of activities that individuals carry out during their daily lives [9]. Lifestyle is a combination of personal behavioral patterns and habits in lifetime which is formed following socialization process. Wolman believes that lifestyle is not behavior or manner, but it is an affair which guides all human behaviors and experiences for unity and it is formed via attitudes and manners, itself [10]. Veblen sees lifestyle as a social behavioral pattern; these behaviors are of social customs and habits and ways of thinking [11]. Overall, although lifestyle is a concept which is tacitly present in Max Weber and Thorstein Veblen's views, it has come to existence during the last two decades in works of Pierre Bourdieu and the change in class system and the formation of urban life with the youth and the new generation [12].

Gordon considers several important factors in studying lifestyle which include consumption patterns, clothing type, talking type, attitudes, and patterns related to interests focus areas in culture such as sexuality, rationality, religion, family, patriotism, education, arts and sports. Bourdieu believes that lifestyle includes properties (luxury and cultural goods) such as: house, villa, automobile, and clothes which individuals gather around themselves and additionally activities with which they distinguish themselves, such as: sports, games, entertainment, clothing, use of language and budgeting[13]. Sobel asserts that the consumption pattern is the most observable and the best index of lifestyle [14]. Lamont et al. also, while emphasizing on organizing personal life method, recognizes entertainment and consumption patterns as the best indices of lifestyle [15]. Giddens introduces life policies as lifestyle [16]. It could be claimed that, whether chosen consciously or unconsciously, a lifestyle could change individual's life, hugely [17].

* **Corresponding Author:** Mahdi Amiri, Faculty member of Department of Educational Sciences PNU, PO Box: 19395-3697, Tehran, Iran. Email:mahdiamiri10@gmail.com

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In a study under the title of “Lifestyle, Mental Health and Happiness Comparison among Female Teachers and Housewives in Boshruye County”, Nurbakhsh & et al (2005) [18] came to this conclusion that there is no significant difference between lifestyle and mental health among female teachers and housewives, however, there is a negative significant relation between lifestyle and mental marks among the two groups.

In a comparative research, Riyahi (2005) [19] studies gender differences in food habits among Iranian and Indian students. While considering mental, social and cultural factors (such as gender, culture, socioeconomic status, and health knowledge and health beliefs), Riyahi studies the food habits among male and female students in Mazandaran University and Punjab University. Research findings suggest that there is a relationship between food habits on the one hand and variables of gender, culture (nationality), family socioeconomic status, health consideration, health beliefs and health knowledge on the other hand. Overall, female students and Indian students had better food habits comparing to male students and Iranian students, respectively, and that leads to an immunization against non-infectious chronic diseases.

In a study under the title of “The Relation between Lifestyle and Students’ General health”, Samimi & et al (2006) [20] studied the relation between lifestyle and health among students of School of Nursing and School of Midwifery at Iran University of Medical Science and they came to this conclusion that there is a significant relationship between components of sports, nutrition, drugs avoidance, observing principles of safety and coping with stress and general health.

In a sociological study under the title of “The Lifestyle of the Youth”, Ebrahimi and Behnui (2010) [21] studied lifestyle and its components among boys and girls in Babolsar and they came to this conclusion that the tendency of boys and girls towards modern culture consumption behaviors is higher than their tendencies towards traditional culture consumption behaviors and there is a significant difference between lifestyle and its components among boys and girls.

In a study under the title of “A Comparison on Marital Satisfaction, Lifestyle and Mental Health among Retired and Working Men and Women”, Rezai & et al (2013)[5] came to this conclusion that males had a higher lifestyle index average, comparing to females and on the other hand, the lifestyle index average working teachers was higher than retired teachers. However, there was no significant difference found between mental health among retired and working males and females.

Lightsey (1994) [22] believes that positive automatic thoughts could predict happiness.

Ezoe and Morimoto (1989) [23] conducted a research to determine the relation between lifestyle behavioral patterns and mental health status in Osaka, Japan in a research under the title of “Lifestyle Behaviors and Mental Health Status among Japanese Workers”. Results suggested that the workers’ health behaviors pattern has a relation with their mental health status.

In a study, Kossek and Ozeki (1998) [24] came to this conclusion that there is a significant relation between depression, anxiety, insomnia and anger symptoms among British teachers with their mental health level.

Furnham and Cheng (2000) [25] believe that self-esteem and extroversion are among the main factors in happiness and pleasure (which are among health factors).

In a study under the title of “The Difference between Complaints about Health”, Stock et al (2003) [26] assessed the commonness of complaints about physical and mental health among university students and studied the related dangerous factor. Results indicated that there was a relationship between physical activity and emergence of physical and mental problems on the one hand, and lack of social support and low level of health awareness, on the other.

In a research on lifestyle and mental health of individuals who were in early years of their retirement, Liepert and Spiegler (2004) [27] studied 400 random cases of Danish males between the age of 50 and 62 and came to this conclusion that inappropriate lifestyle had impacted on these individuals’ mental health and in this group depression, anxiety and neuroticism had the highest prevalence, respectively [28].

In a study, Sarlio, Lejelma and Roose (2004) [29] came to this conclusion that weak mental health is in relationship with unhealthy and inappropriate lifestyle.

Tanaka and Shirakawa (2004) [30] and Atlantis & et al (2004) [31] also, reported that exercise and sports could help with preserving and improving sleeping quality which could increase individuals’ mental health.

Pincuoart and Schindler (2007) [32] showed that lifestyle is different among males and females.

In a study on several groups of retired physicians and their spouses, Park and Kelly (2010) [33] came to this conclusion that lifestyle and life satisfaction predicting factors subsequent to retirement are different in physicians and their spouses.

Lifestyle is among distinguishing mechanisms in today’s society which is emphasized by social scientists. The importance of lifestyle meaning and its types among individuals have led to more attention towards the selection of lifestyle based on personal tastes so that choosing a lifestyle could affect the whole lifetime of an individual along with their physical and mental health. Accordingly, the main issue in the following research is to study the relation between lifestyle and mental health among Mohr County PNU students. The following three questions are proposed in this research:

1. Is there any significant relationship between lifestyle and mental health among students?
2. Is there any significant difference between lifestyle and mental health among students based on moderating variables of group and gender?
3. Which lifestyle aspect is the best predictor of mental health in students?

3. METHODOLOGY

The research method in this study is of descriptive correlation type. The statistical society to this research included all 320 male and female students who were studying at Mohr County PNU during 2013-2014 academic years. To calculate the number of samples for research, 175 (88 male and 87 female) students were chosen via Morgan table, using stratified random sampling equally from 7 fields of study including: educational sciences, accounting, geography, economic sciences, social sciences, law, and management.

4. Instrument

Research tools included:

4.1. General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28)

General Health Questionnaire, which was invented by Goldberg and Hiller in 1979, includes 28 items that evaluates 4 aspects of physical symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunction and depression. Each subscale consists of 7 questions and questions were scored on five point Likert scales with higher scores reflecting stronger agreement with the statements. Baqeri Yazdi and Mohammadi (2008) [34] calculated the reliability of the questionnaire as 0.85 and the reliability of this questionnaire was reported to be 0.80, 0.92, 0.86 and 0.88, respectively. Palahang, Nasr, Barahani and Shahmohammadi (1996) [35] reported 0.91 for the validity of this questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated via Cronbach's α coefficient at 0.89.

4.2. Lifestyle Questionnaire

Researcher-made lifestyle questionnaire was consisted of ten aspects (Table 1) and including 41 items in 4 choice Likert scales of Never (0), Usually (1), Often (2) and Always (3). Researcher-made lifestyle questionnaire reliability coefficient was calculated with Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.79. The correlation for each item was considered desirable with the total score and in case of omitting one item, the α significance would not increase. Hence, there was no need for changing or omitting test items. The formal validity of the questionnaire was approved by experts.

5. Data Analysis Method

Descriptive and inferential methods were used in data analysis. In descriptive analysis, indices such as: frequency, mean, standard deviation, and tables were used. In inferential analysis, tests such as Pearson correlation coefficient, one-way ANOVA, Tukey's test, stepwise multiple Regression and Regression coefficient tables were used.

6. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the research variables descriptive analysis results, based on predicting components (lifestyle) and criterion variable aspects (mental health).

Table 1: Research Variables Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Aspects and Components	Sample Size	Mean	Standard Deviation
Predictor	Physical Health	175	2.64	0.816
	Exercise and Health	175	2.028	0.998
	Weight Control and Nutrition	175	2.09	0.885
	Diseases Prevention	175	1.81	0.618
	Psychological Health	175	2.66	1.003
	Spiritual Health	175	2.531	0.886
	Social Health	175	2.317	0.841
	Drug Avoidance	175	1.988	0.677
	Accident Prevention	175	2.46	1.149
	Environmental Health	175	1.748	0.996
	Total (Lifestyle)	175	2.23	0.852
Criterion	Physical Symptoms	175	1.85	0.843
	Anxiety	175	1.86	0.725
	Social Dysfunction	175	2.48	0.892
	Depression	175	2.09	0.787
	Total (Mental Health)	175	2.075	0.797

The first question to the study is:

Is there any significant relationship between lifestyle and mental health among students?

To study the relation between lifestyle aspects and students' mental health, Pearson correlation test was used and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient between Lifestyle and Students' Mental Health Matrix

Variable	Physical Symptoms	Anxiety	Social Dysfunction	Depression	Physical Health	Exercise and Health	Weight Control and Nutrition	Diseases Prevention	Psychological Health	Spiritual Health	Social Health	Drug Avoidance	Accident Prevention	Environmental Health
Physical Symptoms	1													
Anxiety	0.983	1												
Social Dysfunction	0.917	0.920	1											
Depression	0.986	0.977	0.650	1										
Physical Health	0.765	0.758	0.877	0.802	1									
Exercise and Health	0.892	0.858	0.858	0.893	0.886	1								
Weight Control and Nutrition	0.874	0.856	0.886	0.882	0.932	0.974	1							
Diseases Prevention	0.797	0.785	0.762	0.794	0.879	0.914	0.931	1						
Psychological Health	0.797	0.780	0.898	0.834	0.958	0.917	0.949	0.870	1					
Spiritual Health	0.822	0.792	0.876	0.846	0.957	0.933	0.952	0.904	.979	1				
Social Health	0.820	0.789	0.865	0.843	0.918	0.945	0.963	0.898	.970	.967	1			
Drug Avoidance	0.801	0.795	0.794	0.793	0.913	0.90	0.929	0.934	.877	.894	.881	1		
Accident Prevention	0.830	0.809	0.891	0.852	0.924	0.946	0.959	0.878	.978	.963	.956	0.877	1	
Environmental Health	0.872	0.845	0.767	0.856	0.784	0.931	0.905	0.867	.791	.843	.824	8.829	0.827	1

$p < 0.01$

The second question to the research is:

Is there any significant difference between lifestyle and mental health among students based on moderating variables of group and gender?

Table 3: T-Test Results for Independent Groups on Mental Health Differences based on Moderating Variable of Students' Gender

Component	Sample	Number of Samples	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	t	Sig.	Table Critical Value $p \leq 0.05$
Mental Health	Male	88	1.965	0.768	0.081	-1.847	0.066	1.64
	Female	87	2.186	0.816	0.087			

To compare the mental health among students based on moderating variable of gender, independent groups T-test was used and results at 0.05 error level suggested that there is no significant difference in mental health among male and female students. (Table 3)

Table 4: Results Related to Significant Difference between Students' Mental Health based on Moderating Variable of Field of Study

Component	Moderating Variable	Variables Levels	Research Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	f	Sig.
Mental Health	Field of Study	Educational Sciences	25	1.54	0.342	7.182	0.000
		Accounting	25	2.21	0.918		
		Geography	25	2.10	0.481		
		Economic Sciences	25	1.82	0.862		
		Law	25	2.36	0.805		
		Management	25	1.8	0.408		
		Social Sciences	25	2.69	0.960		

Also, inferential test results from ANOVA (Table 4) to study the existence of significant difference in students' mental health based on moderating variable of field of study, suggest that based on moderating variable of field of study, there is a significant difference among students' mental health mean score at 0.05.

Table 5: Results Related to Tukey Test on Students' Mental Health based on Moderating Variable of Field of Study

Tukey Test Results based on Moderating Variable of Field of Study	Significant Difference among Groups based in Education Level		Standard Deviation	Sig.
	Educational Sciences and Accounting		0.668	0.02
	Educational Sciences and Law		0.820	0.002
	Educational Sciences and Social Sciences		-1.148	0.000
	Economic Sciences and Social Sciences		0.867	0.001
	Management and Social Sciences		0.892	0.000

Paired comparison of means difference (Tukey) (Table 5) presents the aforementioned difference based on moderating variable of field of study among students of educational sciences and accounting, law and social sciences, economic sciences and social sciences and management and social sciences. In other words, students of educational sciences, economic sciences and management had a higher mental health comparing to students of other fields of study.

The third question to the research is:

Which lifestyle aspect is the best predictor of mental health in students at Mohr PNU?

To determine the share of each lifestyle aspect variable in predicting students' mental health, stepwise multiple Regression was used. Initial analyses were done in order to confirm the normality, linearity, and equality and distribution uniformity. Also, distribution diagram and standardized residuals distribution diagram showed that normality, linearity, and equality and are approved. Table 6 and 7 present a brief result and table 8 presents the share of each variable entered into the model in predicting students' mental health.

Table 6: Brief Results from Stepwise Regression Analysis in Predicting Students' Mental Health

Statistical Indices	Multiple Correlation Coefficient R	The Square of the Correlation Coefficient (Coefficient of Determination) R ²	Moderated Correlation Coefficient	Estimation Standard Error
Predictor Variables				
Nutrition	0.891	0.793	0.792	0.363
Nutrition Sports	0.896	0.803	0.801	0.355
Nutrition Sports Diseases Prevention	0.901	0.812	0.809	0.348
Nutrition Sports Diseases Prevention Environmental Health	0.904	0.817	0.813	0.345

Table 6 components present stepwise Regression analysis. As it could be observed, variables which had the least relationship with mental health are omitted. Hence, variables of nutrition, sports, diseases prevention and environmental health had the highest multiple correlations with students' mental health prediction. Based on importance, the order of predictor variables in stepwise Regression analysis in the first step, the component of nutrition with students' mental health has the correlation coefficient of 0.891. In the second step, a component of nutrition and sports with students' mental health has the correlation coefficient of 0.896. In the third step, by addition of component of diseases prevention, the correlation coefficient reaches to 0.901 and in the fourth step, by addition of environmental health, the correlation coefficient reaches to 0.904. In total, these four variables are able to explain 0.817 percent of variance of students' mental health.

Table 7: Stepwise Multiple Regression ANOVA for Predicting Students' Mental Health

Model	Changes Source	Sum of Squares	Freedom Degree	Mean of Squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	87.888	1	87.888	663.650	0.000a
	Residual	22.911	173	0.132		
	Total	110.799	174			
2	Regression	89.024	2	44.512	351.609	0.000b
	Residual	21.774	172	0.127		
	Total	110.799	174			
3	Regression	90.002	3	30.001	246.682	0.000c
	Residual	20.797	171	0.122		
	Total	110.799	174			
4	Regression	90.531	4	22.633	189.842	0.000d
	Residual	20.267	170	0.119		
	Total	110.799	174			

a = Predictors: (Constant), Weight Control and Nutrition

b = Predictors: (Constant), Weight Control and Nutrition, Sports and Health

c = Predictors: (Constant), Weight Control and Nutrition, Sports and Health, Diseases Prevention

d = Predictors: (Constant), Weight Control and Nutrition, Sports and Health, Diseases Prevention Environmental Health

As it was presented in Table 7, ANOVA approves the validity of stepwise Regression in predicting students' mental health.

Table8: Standard and Non-Standard Regression Coefficients for Significant Variables for Predicting Students' Mental Health based on Lifestyle

Indices Variable	Non-Standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Standard Deviation	β		
1- Constant	0.394	0.071		5.570	0.000
Nutrition	0.803	0.031	0.891	25.761	0.000
2- Constant	0.493	0.077		6.431	0.000
Nutrition	0.407	0.135	0.452	3.007	0.003
Sports	0.360	0.120	0.450	2.993	0.003
3- Constant	0.650	0.093		6.963	0.000
Nutrition	0.595	0.148	0.661	4.012	0.000
Sports	0.386	0.118	0.483	3.269	0.001
Diseases Prevention	-0.333	0.118	-0.258	-2.836	0.005
4- Constant	0.684	0.094		7.290	0.000
Nutrition	0.622	0.147	0.690	4.217	0.000
Sports	0.240	0.136	0.301	1.769	0.079
Diseases Prevention	-0.367	0.118	-0.284	-3.124	0.002
Environmental Health	0.153	0.072	0.191	2.107	0.037

Results in Table 8 suggest that in the first step, variable of nutrition, in the second step, variable of sports, in the third step, variable of diseases prevention, and in the fourth step, variable of environmental health have entered in the equation. Results suggest that variable of nutrition with β coefficient of 0.690, variable of sports with β coefficient of 0.301, and variable of environmental health with β coefficient of 0.191 had a positive significant relation with students' mental health and variable of diseases prevention with β coefficient of -0.284 had a negative significant relation with students' mental health. This result shows that increase in nutrition control, exercising and considering environmental health could increase students' mental health and neglecting diseases prevention predicts the decrease of students' mental health negatively and significantly.

6. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

On the relation between lifestyle in physical health aspect with mental health, results indicate that there is a significant relation between them and results from Ezo and Morimoto (1989) [23], Kossek and Ozeki (1998) [24], Liepert and Spiegler (2004) [27], and Sarlio, Lejelma and Roose (2004) [29] approve these findings.

On the relation between lifestyle in sports and health aspect with mental health, results indicate that there is a significant relation between them and results from Stock & et al (2003) [26], Samimi & et al (2006) [20], Tanaka and Shirakawa (2004) [30] and Atlantis et al (2004) [31] approve these findings; that is, students with higher physical activities had the lesser complaints about health issues.

On the relation between lifestyle in nutrition and weight control aspect with mental health, results indicate that there is a significant relation between nutrition and general health and results from Ezo and Morimoto (1994) [23], Ayranci & et al (2005) [36], Riyahi (2005) [19] and Samim & et al (2006) approve these findings.

On the relation between lifestyle in diseases prevention aspect with mental health, results indicate that there is a significant relation between them.

On the relation between lifestyle in psychological health aspect with mental health, results indicate that there is a significant relation between mental health and psychological health and results from Ezo and Morimoto (1994) [23], Lightsey (1994) [22], Kossek and Ozeki (1998) [24], Furnham and Cheng (2000) [25], Hasheminasab (2004) [37] and Samimi & et al (2006) [20] approve these findings.

On the relation between lifestyle in spiritual health aspect with mental health, results indicate that there is a significant relation between them.

On the relation between lifestyle in social health aspect with mental health, results indicate that there is a significant relation between them.

On the relation between lifestyle in drug avoidance aspect with mental health, results indicate that there is a significant relation between mental health and smoking and results from Stock et al (2003) [26], Ezo and Morimoto (1994) [23], and Samimi & et al (2006) [20] approve these findings.

On the relation between lifestyle in accident prevention aspect with mental health, results indicate that there is a significant relation between mental health and observing principles of safety and results from Misra and McKean (2001)[38], and Samimi & et al (2006) [20] approve these findings.

On the relation between lifestyle in environmental health aspect with mental health, results indicate that there is a significant relation between them.

Independent groups T-test results suggested that there is no significant difference between male and female students based on the relation between lifestyle and mental health. However, considering ANOVA there is a significant difference between them based on their fields of study and educational sciences, economic sciences, and management students had a better lifestyle and as a result had a higher mental health level comparing to the other students. Findings from Nurbakhsh & et al (2005) [18], Ebrahimi and Behnui (2010) [21] and Rezai & et al (2013) [5] approve this, while Riyahi (2005) [19], Pincuoart and Schindler (2007) [32], and Park and Kelly (2010) [33] reject it.

Results from stepwise Regression analysis in four steps confirm that among ten aspects of lifestyle, four aspects of: nutrition, sports, diseases prevention and environmental health had the highest correlation coefficient with students' mental health and in total; these four variables are able to predict 0.817 percent dependent variable. This suggests that having a proper nutrition system along with exercising and considering health have a great role in mental health and results from Samimi & et al (2006) [20] approve this.

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