



The Effect of Optimism, Happiness and Self-esteem on Quality of Life among Yemeni University Students

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ABSTRACT

There has been a lack of research in the area of positive psychology variables in the Yemeni context. For this reason, the current research aims to examine the effect of optimism, happiness, self-esteem, on quality of life among Yemeni university students. It also seeks to test whether self-esteem mediates the relationship between optimism and quality of life. 657 Yemeni university students participated in this study. Positive personality index with three-dimensional (optimism, happiness and quality of life) and Rosenberg self-esteem scale were used. The results revealed a positive correlation between optimism, happiness, self-esteem and quality of life. Quality of life was predicted from happiness, optimism, and self-esteem. The results revealed that self-esteem partially mediates the relationship between optimism and quality of life. Also, results showed differences in happiness, self-esteem, and quality of life due to gender. However, the results did not reveal any differences on study variables due to social status or income level.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian mengenai variabel psikologi positif dalam konteks Yaman masih kurang dalam literatur psikologi. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh optimisme, kebahagiaan, dan harga diri, terhadap kualitas hidup di kalangan mahasiswa di Yaman. Penelitian ini juga berupaya menguji apakah harga diri dapat memediasi hubungan antara optimisme dan kualitas hidup. Dari sisi sampel, secara keseluruhan 657 mahasiswa Yaman berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Terkait dengan pengukuran, Indeks kepribadian positif dengan tiga dimensi (optimisme, kebahagiaan dan kualitas hidup) dan skala harga diri Rosenberg digunakan sebagai instrument pengukuran dan pengambilan data. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan adanya korelasi positif antara optimisme, kebahagiaan, harga diri dan kualitas hidup. Kualitas hidup diprediksi dari kebahagiaan, optimisme, dan harga diri. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa harga diri secara parsial memediasi hubungan antara optimisme dan kualitas hidup. Selain itu, hasil penelitian menunjukkan perbedaan kebahagiaan, harga diri, dan kualitas hidup berdasarkan gender. Namun hasil penelitian tidak menunjukkan adanya perbedaan variabel penelitian karena status sosial atau tingkat pendapatan.

Introduction

For decades, the attention of researchers and psychologists has focused on studying psychological disorders and problems in exchange for neglecting positive issues about the human personality (Zawi, 2019). However, with the end of the twentieth century, there was an interest in studying positive issues and the strengths of individuals. The trend that was founded by Seligman is called positive psychology. The emergence of this trend has led to a focus on the positive variables and concepts inherent in the human being (Meshri, 2014). It was interesting in the mechanism of development of these strengths using a number of psychological applications and techniques to

achieve human happiness and quality of life (Kadomi, 2018). The pursuit of a high quality of life is a universal goal shared by individuals across cultures and societies, including students, as they navigate the challenges of their academic journey. Quality of life encompasses various dimensions, such as physical and mental well-being, social relationships, and overall life satisfaction. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the factors that influence quality of life, particularly among students in specific cultural contexts. This research aims to investigate the impact of optimism, happiness, and self-esteem on the quality of life among Yemeni students.

Positive psychology, as a part of psychology, focuses on positive concepts and topics of the individual such as happiness, optimism, self-esteem, quality of life, psychological resilience, etc. (Kadomi, 2018). Optimism has been recognized as a crucial psychological resource that fosters resilience, coping abilities, and overall well-being. Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive association between optimism and quality of life across different populations, including students (Alarcon et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2019). Also, happiness is often regarded as a subjective emotional state characterized by positive affect and life satisfaction. Positive emotions associated with happiness can enhance personal resources, promote social connectedness, and buffer against stressors. Recent investigations have shed light on the relationship between happiness and quality of life among students revealing a positive relationship (Cheung & Lucas, 2014; Ladebo et al., 2017). Also, self-esteem is a critical psychological factor that influences various aspects of life, including well-being and quality of life. Recent research has provided valuable insights into the positive correlation between self-esteem and quality of life among students (Gawas, 2022; Joseph et al., 2019; Mikkelsen et al., 2020). The fact that these variables have a positive role in helping people cope with the various pressures of life. Also, investing this positive energy well contributes to the prosperity and psychological well-being of people (Zawi, 2019).

Optimism

Optimism is defined as a personal readiness of the individual that makes him perceive things around him in a positive way, and then his orientation is positive towards himself, his present, and his future (Dember et al., 1989). Zawi (2019) defines optimism as an emotional state of the individual in his expectation of good and hope for the current and future path of events. This state may be temporary or permanent depending on the individual's past events and experiences. Based on this, it can be said that optimism is an emotional state related to a constructive awareness of the future and its events. Individuals who have positive expectations about the future see the desired outcomes as achievable so they indulge in behaviors that enhance their achievement of these goals (Scheier et al., 1994). On the other hand, pessimistic individuals tend to expect negative consequences for life's challenges. They believe that these situations cannot be changed and cannot be controlled (Maier & Seligman, 1976). This is why individuals' differences in their expectation of the future greatly influence an individual's behavior (Dababi et al., 2019).

Several studies indicate that optimism has a significant impact on the psychological state (Segerstrom et al., 1998), physical well-being (Mulkana & Hailey, 2001), and adaptation to life transformations (Kadomi, 2018). Moreover, optimistic people develop new approaches and behaviors in dealing with problems (Carver et al., 2010). Also, they have the ability to adapt to various pressures of life (Rasmussen et al., 2006). Carver et al. (2010) concluded in their study that optimism is an important predictor of physical and mental health. However, pessimism has been associated with harmful health behaviors. In addition, it has been found that optimism is positively correlated with happiness (Kadomi, 2018). Optimistic individuals have a good level of happiness in their lives (Dember & Brooks, 1989).

Happiness

Habbas (2009) indicates that happiness is a relatively constant positive emotional excitement. It is represented in the individual's sense of joy, pleasure, the enjoyment of a healthy body and mind, and

the absence of negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, or depression (Habbas, 2009). Yahfofi (2002) adds that happiness is a state of fun and the fulfillment of motives that rises to the level of psychological satisfaction. Also, It is the excitement that accompanies self-realization as a whole (Yahfofi, 2002). Furthermore, Zawi (2019) noted that the high degree of happiness is based on three components. The first one is the positive emotional repetition. The second is the relative absence of negative sentiment. Finally, the sense of psychological satisfaction with life. Habbas (2009) adds to this physical health, mental health, and emotional balance as main dimensions of happiness. Happiness is not limited to positive emotions only, but also to individual satisfaction with different aspects of his life "family, professional and social areas" (Zawi, 2019). Feelings of joy and pleasure that included in happiness are often associated with another set of positive traits, such as optimism and hope (Dember & Brooks, 1989). The personal criterion is also very important in defining the concept of happiness. The individual decides whether he/she is happy or not (Zawi, 2019).

According to Seligman's (2002) analysis of happiness, there are three dimensions of happiness: the pleasant life, engagement life, and meaningful life. A pleasant or enjoyable life involves the individual being successful in seeking and maintaining positive emotion about the past, present, and future as much as possible. It also includes learning skills that increase the intensity and frequency of positive emotions and reduce negative ones. In addition to obtaining fulfillment of desires in major areas of life. Engagement life includes the obligations of the individual in various fields. It relies on using one's personal strengths to improve life in addition to contributing to the happiness of others through the different roles of the individual in life. Meaningful life refers to the individual's use of his own powers and talents to service something that the individual believes greater than himself. This leads to a subjective sense of meaning in life. It means the person has a higher purpose for why he lives and does not live his life arbitrarily (Seligman et al., 2006). The feeling of happiness enhances a person's sense of self and his quality of life (Kadomi, 2018). Happiness is also an indicator of an individual's positive view of himself and the events around him. This, in turn, enhances the individual's self-confidence and contributes to increasing his self-esteem (Dababi et al., 2019).

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is an important dimension of personality and has a major influence on behavior. Through it, human behavior can be properly and clearly understood (Hassanein & Khososy, 2016). Chavez and Heatherton (2015) define self-esteem as the process of evaluation and judgment that an individual gives to himself. It includes his attitudes to himself, whether negative or positive and his view toward himself and his respect for it (Chavez & Heatherton, 2015). Rimawi (2011) affirms that self-esteem is the degree of satisfaction that an individual feels towards himself, and it does not imply vanity or the satisfaction of his desires at the expense of others. It is the natural striving to excel through the achievement of an individual's goals (Rimawi, 2011). Self-esteem is a reflection of how individuals see themselves. Individuals who view themselves positively and focus on their strengths have high self-esteem (Mowanes & Abu Kwaik, 2020). This affects their behavior and interaction with the surrounding community (Hassanein & Khososy, 2016). However, individuals who have a negative view of their abilities and talents, their behaviors are characterized by hesitation, fear, and distrust (Mowanes & Abu Kwaik, 2020).

The self-esteem of the individual is influenced by a number of subjective factors such as body image (Tahan, 1995), mental capacity (Kaoud, 1992), and intelligence level (Zahrn, 2005). In addition, there are environmental factors that play an important role in an individual's self-esteem, such as social relationships, family, and school (Buunk & Collins, 1993; Diener & Diener, 2009; Zahrn, 2005). Dulaimi et al. (2012) indicate that positive self-esteem contributes to the achievement of stability and psychological well-being of individuals. It also enhances the individual's quality of life and increases

his sense of happiness (Kadomi, 2018). Self-esteem is considered one of the important indicators of the quality of life that an individual lives and the extent of his satisfaction with it (Dulaimi et al., 2012).

Quality of life

The concept of quality of life is one of the fundamental concepts in positive psychology. It is considered an important indicator of a person's happiness and self-esteem. It also indicates a person's sense of psychological health and well-being, especially in light of the rapid changes that human life is witnessing (Mustafa, 2018). The concept of quality of life refers to the degree of satisfaction of the individual that he feels towards various aspects of life and the duration of his happiness with human existence (Mubarak, 2012). It includes personal experiences of life situations (Jassam, 2009). Mahmoud (2018) adds that it is the degree of individual feeling of psychological happiness resulting from being satisfied with the conditions of their daily life.

Quality of life is a relative concept that is dealt with from a social, economic, medical, and psychological point of view according to the individual's vision and the criteria adopted by (Elamrousy, 2015). It is a multidimensional concept that includes a number of different areas including physical health, social relationships, job roles, and the subjective feeling of life satisfaction (Becker et al., 1995). Zawi (2019) indicates that the quality of life is determined by two indicators that are subjective dimension and objective dimension. Subjective dimension means personal satisfaction with life, the individual's feeling of happiness and satisfaction with his life. The objective dimension means the satisfaction of physical health, social relations, community activities, and the standard of living. The importance of quality of life lies in increasing the adaptation to the environment (Kadomi, 2018). He asserts that students who have a high level of life satisfaction have a high ability to adapt to university life. There is also a relationship between satisfaction with life, and social skills, emotional balance and self-esteem (Hamaydiyeh et al., 2018; Hassanein & Khososy, 2016; Kadomi, 2018). This is related to the ability of individuals to promote positive behaviors such as optimism and self-esteem in order to achieve a higher quality of life and to live happily (Hamaydiyeh et al., 2018).

The current study

The field of positive psychology aims to investigate the positive aspects of human personality and how these factors can be utilized to enhance happiness and psychological well-being. However, when examining studies conducted on positive psychology variables in the Yemeni context, it becomes evident that there is a lack of research in this area compared to other psychological variables. Elements such as optimism, happiness, and self-esteem are crucial in determining one's quality of life and overall satisfaction (Dulaimi et al., 2012; Kadomi, 2018; Zawi, 2019). In light of the ongoing war in Yemen since 2015, positive variables become particularly important as coping strategies for students facing educational and social pressures. The present study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, is among the few studies that have examined positive psychology variables in the Yemenis, which is what makes it important and urgent in the Yemeni context.

The current study shed light on the psychological resources that are crucial for promoting a high quality of life among Yemeni students and can inform interventions and programs aimed at enhancing their well-being. The findings of this study can inform interventions and programs aimed at enhancing the well-being and overall quality of life of Yemeni students, ultimately fostering their personal growth and success. Exploring these positive variables among university students not only aids in predicting their adaptation to future professional life (Kadomi, 2018) but also assists students in realizing their aspirations and utilizing their talents and skills to attain happiness and life satisfaction. The study seeks to explore the potential relationships between optimism, happiness, self-esteem, and quality of life by answering the following questions. First, is there a correlation between optimism, happiness, self-esteem and quality of life?. Second, can the quality of life be predicted from optimism, happiness, and self-esteem?. Third, does self-esteem mediate the relationship between optimism and quality of life?. Finally, are there statistically

significant differences in the study variables (optimism, happiness, quality of life and self-esteem) due to demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, income level).

Method

Participants and procedures

A total of 657 Yemeni university students (Table 1) participated in this study. The age of the participants was between 17 – 55 ($M=23.66$, $SD= 4.90$). 342 of the participants were males (52.1%) and 315 were females (47.9%).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables	N	%
Gender		
Male	342	52.1%
Female	315	47.9%
Social status		
Single	532	81%
Married	118	18%
Divorced	7	1%
Income level		
30,000 YER or less	84	12.8%
Between 30,001 – 60,000 YER	165	25.1%
Between 60,001 – 90,000 YER	146	22.2%
Between 90,001 – 120,000 YER	116	17.7%
More than 120,001 YER	146	22.2%

As for the procedures, initially, the research model was prepared, and its objectives clearly defined. Then an application for ethical approval was submitted by the Ethics committee of Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University. After obtaining the ethical approval, the Yemeni Students Union was contacted to facilitate access for the students. The data was collected through an electronic questionnaire sent to the students. At the beginning of the questionnaire, the idea of the research and the mechanism of participation in the study were explained. It was also made clear to the participants that they could withdraw from the study if they encountered any situation that would upset them. In addition, several professors at Yemeni universities were contacted to encourage students to participate.

Instruments

Demographic Information Form. In order to collect some demographic information about the participants, a demographic information form was developed. It includes information about age, gender, social status and income level.

Positive Personality Index. This scale was developed by Kadomi (2018) to measure three positive indicators of personality. The developer of the scale has conducted multiple studies on happiness, quality of life, and optimism using various measures like the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ), Fox scale of quality of life, and Abdel Khaleq's scale of optimism. Based on the results of these studies, he identified the items in each scale that contributed most to predicting the total score of the variables studied, and he concluded by developing a brief index of positive personality for the Arab culture. The index consists of 15 items that measure three dimensions: optimism, happiness, and quality of life with five items for each dimension. For example, the factor of optimism includes items such as: I see relief will be soon, I expect tomorrow to be better than today, the future has pleasant surprises in store for me; the factor of happiness includes items like: I feel that life is very rewarding, I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone, I find most things amusing; the factor of quality of life includes items such as: I live my life to the fullest, my life has meaning, I have a sense of balance

in my life. The response on the scale was by a 5-point Likert-type (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The scale developer calculated the reliability of the scale among university students and the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.86. In the current study, the value of Cronbach's alpha was 0.82 and all these values can be considered acceptable and reflect the reliability of the scale.

Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale. This scale was developed by Rosenberg (1965). The scale consists of 10 items that measure one dimension of self-esteem. Response on the scale was using a 4-point Likert-type (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). The scores are reversed on negatively formulated items. Due to the scale's reliability, it has been used in many studies and has been translated into many languages (Baumeister et al., 2003; Nemček et al., 2017; Zayed, 2004). In present study, the Arabic version of the scale was used, which adapted to the Arab culture by Zayed (2004). The scale adaptor calculated the reliability of the Arabic version that was 0.83 using test-retest method. The value of Cronbach's alpha in current study was 0.80.

Data analysis

In order to analyze the data of the current research and answer the questions of the study, the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 and Jamovi 1.6.12 version were used. Means and standard deviations of the variables were calculated, in addition to the Pearson correlation coefficient to calculate the correlations between the variables. Also, multiple linear regression was calculated for the prediction of the dependent variable. T-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were also used to measure the differences in the study variables according to the demographic variables. Level 05 was adopted as the level of statistical significance to accept the results in the current study.

Result

Correlation between variables

To examine the correlation between the variables of the current study, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated. The results in Table 2 show that there is a positive correlation between all study variables (optimism, happiness, quality of life, and self-esteem). The correlation coefficient values ranged from 0.22 to 0.72, all of them were statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level. Also, there is positive correlation between age and both of happiness and quality of life. However, results do not show any correlation between age and both of optimism and self-esteem.

Table 2. Correlation between Study Variables

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Age	1				
2. Optimism	0.029	1			
3. Happiness	.181**	.527**	1		
4. Self-esteem	-0.005	.221**	.272**	1	
5. Quality of life	.137**	.587**	.762**	.315**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Predicting quality of life

In order to predict the quality of life from optimism, happiness and self-esteem, multiple linear regression was calculated using the Enter method. The regression results in Table 3 indicate that the model explained 63.7% of the variance and the model was statistically significant predictor of quality of life, $F(3,653) = 382.324$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.637$. The results show that happiness was a significant predictor of quality of life, $\beta = 0.607$, $t(657) = 21.497$, $p < 0.01$. Optimism was a significant predictor of quality of life, $\beta = 0.246$, $t(657) = 8.832$, $p < 0.01$. Self-esteem was also a significant predictor of

quality of life, $\beta = 0.096$, $t(657) = 3.897$, $p < 0.01$. This means that quality of life was predicted from happiness, optimism, and self-esteem. Results indicate that happiness was the first predictor of quality of life, then optimism, and finally self-esteem.

Table 3. Coefficients of Predictors Variables

Predictors Variables	β	t	p
Optimism	0.246	8.832	0.000
Happiness	0.607	21.497	0.000
self-esteem	0.096	3.897	0.000

The mediating effect of self-esteem

To test whether self-esteem mediates the relationship between optimism and quality of life, mediation estimates between variables were performed. Table 4 shows mediation estimates and percent of direct, indirect, and total relationship. It is clear from Table 4 that the total effect of optimism on quality of life was significant, $\beta = 0.0$, $t = 18.58$, $p < 0.001$. With the inclusion of mediating variable (self-esteem) the impact of optimism on self-esteem was still significant, $\beta = 0.595$, $t = 17.27$, $p < 0.001$. The indirect effect of optimism on quality of life through self-esteem was significant, $\beta = 0.047$, $t = 4.23$, $p < 0.001$. That means that the relationship between optimism and quality of life is partially mediated by self-esteem.

Table 4. Mediation Estimates

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	t	p
Indirect	$a \times b$	0.0471	0.0111	4.23	< .001
Direct	C	0.5946	0.0344	17.27	< .001
Total	$c + a \times b$	0.6417	0.0345	18.58	< .001

Differences on study variables by demographic variables

To exam the differences on the study variables by demographic variables, factorial ANOVA was used. The results are presented in Table 5. As for optimism, the results show that there are statistically significant differences on happiness due to gender, $F(1,649) = 12.565$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.019$. That means that male students ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.83$) have a high level of happiness than female students ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.87$). However, there are no differences in happiness due to social status or income level. As for happiness, the results showed that there are statistically significant differences on happiness due to gender, $F(1,649) = 12.565$, $p > 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.019$. That means that male students ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.83$) have a high level of happiness than female students ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.87$). However, there are no differences in happiness due to social status or income level.

As for self-esteem the results showed significant differences on self-esteem attributable to gender, $F(1,649) = 5.217$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.008$. Female students ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.64$) have a high level of self-esteem than male students ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.65$). However, results did not show any differences on self-esteem attributable to social status or income level. As for quality of life, there are statistically significant differences on quality of life by gender, $F(1,649) = 4.243$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.006$. Male students ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.82$) reported a better quality of life than female students ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.85$). However, there are no differences on quality of life due to social status or income level.

Discussion

The current study aimed to examine the relationship between optimism, happiness, self-esteem, and quality of life among Yemeni university students. The current results found a positive statistically significant correlation among optimism, happiness, self-esteem and quality of life. These results agree with the results of the studies of Zawi (2019) and Kadomi (2018). The current result can be explained by the fact that the variables addressed in the current study include variables that reflect the positive

characteristics of the human personality. Optimism, happiness, self-esteem, and quality of life represent a consistent set of concepts that express a positive trait of the individual. Moreover, these positive behaviors affect each other. For example, thinking about the future and expecting good things (optimism) helps the individual to improve his view of himself (self-esteem). The individual's enjoyment of his life in accordance with his goals and needs (happiness) leads to an increase in life satisfaction and an improvement in the quality of life. This in turn leads to the existence of a personality pattern that can be called a positive personality. The most prominent features and characteristics of this pattern are optimism, happiness, self-esteem, quality of life, and other concepts of positive psychology.

Table 5. ANOVA result

	Variables	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Optimism	Gender	0.0570	1	0.0570	0.0971	0.755	0.000
	Social status	0.2665	2	0.1333	0.2272	0.797	0.001
	Income level	2.1239	4	0.5310	0.9051	0.460	0.006
	Residuals	380.7422	649	0.5867			
Happiness	Gender	9.028	1	9.028	12.656	0.000	0.019
	Social status	3.826	2	1.913	2.682	0.069	0.008
	Income level	1.794	4	0.448	0.629	0.642	0.004
	Residuals	462.951	649	0.713			
Self-esteem	Gender	2.158	1	2.158	5.217	0.023	0.008
	Social status	1.773	2	0.886	2.143	0.118	0.007
	Income level	2.117	4	0.529	1.280	0.277	0.008
	Residuals	268.455	649	0.414			
Quality of Life	Gender	2.925	1	2.925	4.243	0.040	0.006
	Work situation	2.540	2	1.270	1.843	0.159	0.006
	Income level	4.559	4	1.140	1.654	0.159	0.010
	Residuals	447.277	649	0.689			

In this study, quality of life was predicted from happiness, optimism, and self-esteem. These results are similar to the results of the study of Abdul-Khalek (2017), which found that happiness and self-esteem predict the quality of life. It is also similar to the results of Mishra's (2014) study, which found that optimism predicted quality of life. The quality of life is affected by a person's view on life in general and his vision of the future in particular. A person's anticipation of positive events and focusing on the positive aspects of daily events (optimism) helps him to improve his life and increases his satisfaction with life. The individual's enjoyment of the moments in his life and living them in happiness and contentment leads to an improvement in his quality of life. In addition, promoting a positive self-view helps to improve self-esteem and personal quality of life.

It can be said that an individual's quality of life can be improved by promoting activities that make the individual feel happy, which leads to an improvement in the quality of life. In addition, individual focus on the expectation of positive results leads to an increase in the quality of life. The results of the current study revealed a partial mediation of self-esteem in the relationship between optimism and quality of life. This result is similar to the result of the Agberotimi and Oduaran (2020) study. The current result explains that the individual's anticipation of good events improves his self-perception. This positive view and self-esteem lead to an improvement in the quality and enjoyment of life. In other words, optimism enhances self-esteem despite all the mistakes that an individual can make. This, in turn, leads to the individual's sense of his life and satisfaction with it.

The results of the current study showed a positive correlation between age, happiness and quality of life. This result is similar to the result of the Agberotimi and Oduaran (2020) study, while it contradicts the results of the study of Zawi (2019) that found that there was no effect of age on optimism, happiness and quality of life. The current result can be explained that an individual's sense of the meaning, quality and cheerfulness of life depends on an increased awareness and understanding of life. This requires time for the individual to reach maturity and realize the quality of life he lives. But hope represents a state of anticipation of positive events more than it is experiencing the events.

The results of the current study revealed that there are differences in the level of happiness, self-esteem and quality of life due to gender. Male students have a higher level of happiness and quality of life than female students. This is similar to the results of the Dababi et al. (2019) study, and in contrast to the result of the Jamal (2016) study. This can be interpreted as an expected result compared to the environment in which the study was conducted. Males are the main element in social and public life in Yemen, and they can engage in various activities, allowing them to enjoy life and fulfill their desires. On the contrary, women should only stay at home or go to university. This is due to the social upbringing in Yemen and social restrictions that hinder women from working in wider areas compared to men.

The present result revealed that female students have a higher level of self-esteem than male students. This is similar to the result of Gawas (2020), and contradicts the result of the Zawi (2019) study. This can be explained that as a result of the central role of males in public and university life, female students enhance their self-confidence through engaging in individual activities and hobbies, which in turn enhance female students' self-esteem. Also, it was attributed to the greater interest of females in education compared to males. Females top the lists of successful candidates in Yemeni universities. This success achieved by females enhances their self-confidence, which leads to an increase in their self-esteem.

The current results concluded that there were no differences in optimism, happiness, self-esteem and quality of life due to social status and income level. This can be explained by the fact that the social and economic conditions are somewhat similar, especially with the war that is still going on in Yemen. This makes most university students live the same difficulties and problems faced by most members of society in general.

Like with any scientific study, there are some limitations in the current study. The concept of quality of life was treated as a one-dimensional variable. It will be better in future studies to deal with the concept with more than one dimension (healthy quality of life, family quality of life, economic quality of life). There are some factors that have an important impact on quality of life and happiness that were not addressed in the current study, such as religiousness, availability of job opportunities, and freedom from organic diseases. It is also suggested to conduct more studies about the concepts of positive psychology in the Yemeni environment and among participants from several social groups. It will be useful in future studies to use the qualitative approach to better understand positive variables.

Through the results reached in the current study, it is recommended to implement some training programs that enhance the positive concepts among university students. It is also suggested for university professors to focus on the concept of optimism and its applications inside and outside the university. Education is the gateway to a better future for the country. And university students are the hope to change the difficult reality. Moreover, it is recommended for governmental and non-governmental institutions to adopt programs for self-esteem and improvement of the psychological well-being of students to overcome as many negative effects of war as possible.

Conclusion

In the present study, the correlations between optimism, happiness, self-esteem and quality of life were examined. The results revealed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between all four variables. Happiness, optimism, and self-esteem predicted quality of life. A partial mediation role of self-esteem was shown in the relationship between optimism and quality of life. The results revealed a positive correlation between age and both happiness and quality of life. It was found that there are differences in happiness, self-esteem and quality of life due to gender. The male students expressed a higher level of happiness and quality of life than female students. While the female students expressed higher self-esteem than male students. The results did not show any differences in optimism, happiness, self-esteem, and quality of life due to social status or income level.

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