

# Social Inclusion and Resilience as Predictors of Life Satisfaction Among University Undergraduates in Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The university is designed to prepare young people for the challenges of the workplace and enhance the achievement of their 4/c goals. The developmental trajectories and experiences associated with being in the university have important implications for psychosocial development in later stages of life. This study investigated the contributions of social inclusion and resilience in university students' life satisfaction in the Niger Delta region. Participants were 131 students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt, Rivers state. Data collection was by means of a questionnaire. Statistical analysis was done using Hierarchical multiple regression. Age of participants was included in the regression model as a covariate. Results showed that even as the effect of age was controlled for, social inclusion positively predicted satisfaction with We, with a contribution of 11% in explaining the variance in life satisfaction. Higher satisfaction with 4/c was also predicted by resilience which explained 28% of the variance in life satisfaction. Resilience was a stronger predictor of life satisfaction, compared to social inclusion. The implication of the finding is that opportunities and resources should be provided for young people to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life of the society, but essentially, resilience building programmes should be implemented in order to ensure that youths enjoy a good standard of well-being and also have optimal quality of life in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Life satisfaction; psychosocial, development; resilience; social inclusion; sustainable development; well-being.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The University education is basically designed to prepare young people for workplace and enhance the achievement of their goals. Thus, the developmental trajectories and expenses associated with being in the university have implications for psychological development in later stages in life which will make them have equitable access to an enhanced wellbeing and life satisfaction and sustainability. Social, cultural, policy, economic and decision making is a national and international concern. Many governments including Nigerian government have set substantial targets to improve the access participation hence the introduction of university education.

Niger delta region is a coastal region in Southern Nigeria close to the Atlantic Ocean. Bebebiafai, (2007) stated that it

covers an area of about 70,000kms extending eastward of longitude 430 east to the Nigeria - Cameroun border. It lies within same 22 major estuaries that are linked locally by a complicated network of mangrove creeks, rich in wetlands, biodiversity, oil and gas as well as human resources (Anyaeibunam 2000). It also hosts Africa's largest region (Aawon, 2006 as cited in Abraham (2011). Geopolitically, Niger Delta regions comprise Nigerian states: Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. The area has huge oil reserves - a strategic resource that has become the main story of Nigerian's economy since 1970s. At present, oil exports accounts to about 92% of Nigerian's foreign exchange earnings,

Thereby making the Niger Delta to pride itself as the centre of Nigerian's oil wealth.

Inclusion is an interesting concept. In its most basic understanding, the term encompasses notions of redressing exclusion. Fundamentally, the mere existence of the concept is dependent on pre-existing forms of exclusion. The basic form of any inclusion agenda is to bring the "outsiders in". (Gidley, et al; 2010).

Social inclusion is defined in the European Union (EU) as having the opportunities of resource to participate fully in economic, social, and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of well-being that is considered normal in the society in which we live (Commission of the European Communities, 2000). Three dimensions of inclusion have been identified namely; experiences of friendships, feeling worthwhile through meaningful activities and hopefulness (Davidson, et al!, 2001). Social inclusion is a multidimensional concept encompassing physical aspects (housing), psychological aspects (a sense of belonging) social aspects (friendships) and occupational aspects (leisure) (Le Boutiller et al., 2010).

Social Inclusion can improve well-being and life satisfaction of individuals and groups as it can also promote and provide both mental and physical gains in order to acquire life goals. This debate aligns with the relationship that exists between social inclusion and social exclusion. These concepts are often viewed as opposite ends of a simple continuum, when conceptualization of social exclusion are examined, the

commonly identified dimensions that focus on the one hand political, economic and social structures and the other hand are social relationship based on mutual acceptance (Secker, 2010) argues that is more helpful to separate out the two concepts and to think of exclusion as operating on a structural levels through barriers that work to exclude individuals from full participation in society, akin to the complex disadvantage described by (Jenkins, 2011). Inclusion operates on an individual or group level and relates to extent to which people are accepted and feel they belong within different social contexts (Wilson et al, 2014). Social inclusion overlaps with the following concepts; social quality; social networks; well being and quality of life.

Similarly, Social identity theorists speculate that people attain an important part of their self- concept from membership in different social categories or groups. When a group provides a psychologically meaningful basis for self-definition, members are motivated to establish a positive distinction between that group and other relevant out — groups.

Contextually social inclusion is operationalized as the process of improving terms for individuals and groups to take part in the society by empowering the youth, poor, and living a fulfilled life. In other words, it is used to ensure that youths are giving full rights to participate in policy making, decision-making, access to quality education<sup>7</sup> cultural, health care basic services, promotes their roles as active contributors to society, and affords young people with the opportunities to reach their potentials and achieve their goals (Bergman, 2017).

Satisfaction is a Latin word that means to make or do enough, satisfaction with one's life implies contentment with your acceptance or the fulfillment of one's wants and needs for one's life as a whole. In essence, life satisfaction is a subjective assessment of the quality of one's life because it is inherently an evaluation judgment of life satisfaction. Life satisfaction has a large contractive component. (Sousa et al, 2001); opined that individual's overall life satisfaction reports are based on personal comparisons between self-determined criteria and perceived life circumstances. Similarly, life satisfaction refers to a person's subjective evaluation of the degree to which his/her most needs, goals and wishes have been fulfilled. According to (Frisch, 1998); life satisfaction is used with a number of related concepts. Life satisfaction has been defined as a cognitive evaluation of the quality of a person's overall life or with specific aspects of life such as family, friends and community it probably serves as the umbrella under which other terms are covered.

Veenhoven (1996); life satisfaction can be fairly well measured, they consider how satisfied people are with life and to determine the extent to which the judgments may differ. Life satisfaction is prompted by the hope of finding ways to create greater happiness for a greater number, for this purpose the study confirmed to the theories of discontent. Satisfaction is the result of a compromise between life as it—is

conceptions of how — life — should — be. Standards of how — life — should — be are seen to draw a perception of what is feasible and a comparison with others. These standards of comparison are thought to vary. This implies that it is not possible to create lasting satisfaction; neither at the individual level nor the societal level. At the individual level, this theory predicts that satisfaction is a short lived phenomenon.

People will be satisfied when life comes close to ideal, but as people come closer to the ideal, they will tend to set higher demands and hence end up as dissatisfied as before. (Heady et al, 1999); said that at the societal level, this theory implies that average satisfaction tends to neutralize as well. If satisfaction and dissatisfaction balance out in the lives of individual, citizens, the average in the country cannot be far from zero. The empirical evidence shows that life satisfaction is relative. One implication of this theory is that changes in living conditions, from good to bad, or vice versa, will have no lasting consequences for life satisfaction.

Empirical research also shows that Life satisfaction is a taint, suggests that the hope of creating greater happiness for the greater number is futile. This holds that satisfaction is a fixed disposition, and figures also at the individual level. Veenhoven (1995) opined that the individual level variant sees satisfaction as a personal trait, a general tendency to like or dislike things. This tendency can stain unborn temperature as well as the overall evaluation of life. Improvement of having conditions will not result in greater satisfaction with life.

Therefore, life satisfaction does not appear to a stable trait; the result can be summarized as follows: firstly, life — satisfaction does not remain the same over a period of time; particularly, not over the length of a period of time. Secondly, a life — satisfaction is not insensitive to change in living conditions. Thirdly, satisfaction is not entirely an internal matter, it is true that evaluations of life are influenced by personal characteristics and collective orientations. The societal variant of this theory assumes that tendency to like or dislike life is point of a common natural character. Some cultures would tend to have a gloom outlook on life, whereas others are optimistic.

Resilience simply stated, is positive adaptation in response to adversity, resilience in psychology refers to the idea of an individual's ability to cope with stress and adversity. This coping may result to the individual "bouncing back" to a previous state of normal functioning, or experience of exposure of adversity to produce a "steeling effect" and function better than expected. Resilience as described by Ryff (1989); is an individual's capacity for maintenance, recovery or improvement of well being in the face of life challenges. Warfield (2011) observed that since four decades ago, scientific investigation of resilience has progressed through the years to integrate biological, emotional and psychological processes in the resilience model. According to the resilience model, the resilience process is the experience of being

disrupted by stressors, challenges, disappointments or adverse situations, and afterwards, assessing one’s personal gifts and strengths to grow stronger through the disruption.

In this refund, vulnerable groups such as the Niger Delta people may need internal protective factors in order to respond or adapt positively to life’s circumstances and have better psychological well being. Students, pave shown that the internal protective factors are encapsulated in the resilience core compelling of a purposeful life, perseverance, equality, self-reliance and existential aloneness according to Warfield, (2011); people have no control of life situations, they can control how they respond to these experiences and they can do better with resilience. It is implied that high resilience may be manifested in greater perception of control over one’s situation, the link between resilience and life satisfaction has received increasing attention in scientific literature as researchers try to understand why some individuals think despite difficulties of life and social deprivation. The positive relation between resilience and life satisfaction reveals the significance of resilience.

In spite of the wealth of research of on life satisfaction and resilience of older adults and those who are not students, few studies of social inclusion, resilience and life satisfaction among youths have been conducted. Nigeria today faces increasingly complex challenges that can undermine their opportunities for achieving their fullest potentials across various domains of functioning. Particularly in impoverished society where they are deprived or excluded and as such affecting their daily life namely; Community Violence, poverty, discrimination, disrupted attachments and neglect among others are often so great that they can jeopardize aspect of a student’s life, hence the study investigated the social inclusion, resilience and life satisfaction in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. The objective of this study’s is to fill this gap in knowledge concerning social inclusion as it may serve as intervention to encourage university students in Niger Delta Region. The hypotheses for this study are as follows:

1. Social inclusion will significantly predict life satisfaction among Niger Delta students
2. Resilience will significantly predict life satisfaction among Niger Delta students.

**II. METHODS AND MATERIALS**

*Participants and procedure*

A convenient sample of 131 students from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt formed the sample size of the study.

Table 1: Showing participants.

Male:	70
Female:	61
Total	131participants

*Procedure*

Data was collected using a questionnaire of three Scales 2 1-Item Social inclusion scale (SiS), 14 – Item Resilience Scale (RS-14) and 5-Item satisfaction with life scale (SwLS)

The researcher distributed the questionnaire among the students from different departments and different levels. Participants were students who were indigenous young adults of the nine Niger Delta Stat who were approached in their class rooms by the researcher and asked them to participate in a social in resilience and study on life satisfaction of students. Those who consented were given the questionnaires to fill. The researcher explained the nature of the study to the participants, what they were required to do and who was undertaking the research.

Participants were informed that they were free to withdraw at any stage of the study, without any prejudice, and that their personal information would remain confidential. They were also encouraged to answer the questions as honestly as possible. All the participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study, and were not provided with any reward for participation. The questionnaire was returned by the participants as soon as it was completed. The researcher encouraged participants to respond to all the items in order to obtain complete data. In total, 200 questionnaires were administered but 131 were properly completed and returned to the researcher.

*Measures:*

*Instruments*

Resilience Scale (RS-14,)

This is a 14-item scale, developed by (Warfield et al; 1993) to measure the capacity to withstand life stressors thrive and make meaning from life’s challenges. The items of the RS- 14 are scored using a 7-point response format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Some items in RS-14 include: I usually take things in stride; my life has meaning; etc. Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .91 to .93 across several studies was reported by (Warfield et al; 993). The concurrent administration of RS- 14 and some other measures by the developers revealed significant discriminate validity coefficients with life satisfaction (r.37) morale (r=.31) depression (r =.4 1), self-reported health status (r-.30) and a highly adequate convergent validity with the 25-item Resilience Scale (r.97). In a study aimed at validating RS14 in Nigeria, (Abiola et al., 2011) reported a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .81, a convergent validity of .97 with RS-25 as well as discriminant validity coefficients of-.28 (Depression subscale of 1-hospital Anxiety Depression Scale, WADS) and -.26 (Anxiety subscale of HADS). Ifeagwazi, et al; (2015) carried out a principal component factor analysis using extraction method and obtained a homogenous, one-factor structure. Hence the RS- 14 can be used as a unidimensional scale. Cronbach’s of .83 and a Spearman-Brown split-half reliability coefficient of .80 were reported (see Ifeagwazi et

al., 2015). Higher scores on the RS-1 4 indicate more resilient characteristics.

*Satisfaction with Life Scale (SwLS,)*

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SwLS) was developed by (Diener et al., 1985).The scale is a brief self-reported instrument for assessing the cognitive dimension of well being. Specifically, it is composed of five items that attempt to assess an individual’s general sense of satisfaction with their life, with items like I am satisfied with my life; So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life. The scale uses a 7- point Likert response format ranging from i-i, with I strongly disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Slightly Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 5 = Slightly Agree, 6 Agree, 7 = strongly agree. No item was reversed. One of the reasons for the success of SwLS is that it is widely used, and, has been translated to over twenty languages worldwide such as Dutch, Taiwanese, Spanish, French, Russian, Korean. In Nigeria, (Oladipo, et al; 2013) reported an internal consistency reliability coefficient was .79. In (Okwaraji et al., 2017) study, the internal consistency reliability coefficient of SwLS was .83, and the\_ two week test—retest reliability coefficient was .74. Among Nigerian adults, (Igbokwe et al., 2016) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of SwLS was reported to be .72. It also showed factorial validity based on its factor loadings and adequate convergent validity with measures of gratitude, optimism, personal growth and meaning in life (Igbokwe et al., 2016).

*Data Analysis*

The correlations of the demographic variables and study variables are shown in Table 1, while findings of the regression analysis is in Table 2.

Table 1: Correlations of demographic variables, social inclusion, resilience and life satisfaction

Variables	1	2	3	4
1 Gender	-1			
2 Age	.07	-		
3 Social Inclusion	-.18*	.30**	-	
4 Resilience	-.14	.24**	.45***	-
5 Life satisfaction	-.12	.25**	.39***	.65***

Note \*\*\* p<.001; \*\* p<.01; \* p<.05; Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female)

Results in the Table I showed that gender did not significantly correlate with life satisfaction. There was a significantly positive relationship between age and all the study variables: social inclusion (r .30, p<.01), resilience (r .24, p<.01), and life satisfaction (r .25, p<.01). Social inclusion also had a positive relationship with resilience (r .45, p<.001) and life satisfaction (r = .39, p<.001). Resilience correlated positively with life satisfaction (r .65, p<.001).

Table 2: Hierarchical multiple regression resilience, with age as a control variable predicting life satisfaction by social inclusion and

Predictors	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	B	β	t	B	β	t	B	β	t
Age	.28	.26	2.98**	.17	.15	1.79	.08	.08	1.08***
Social inclusion				.20	.34	4.05***	.06	.10	1.27
Resilience							.39	.60	8.09***
R <sup>2</sup>	.07			.17			.46		
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	.07			.11			.28		
F	8.87(1, 127)***			13.15(2, 126)***			35.08 (3, 125)***		
ΔF	8.87(1, 127)***			16.37(1, 126)***			65.47(1, 125)***		

\*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001; ΔR<sup>2</sup> = Change in R<sup>2</sup>; ΔF = Change F

Results of the hierarchical multiple regression for the test of the hypotheses is shown in Table 2. Age was included in the Step of the regression model due to its significant relationship with life satisfaction in the Correlations Table. Age significantly and positively predicted life satisfaction, ft = .28, t(130) = 2.98, p<.01. The unstandardized regression coefficient (B) showed that for every one unit increase in age, life satisfaction increases by .26 units. The contribution of age in explaining the variance in life satisfaction was 7% (R<sup>2</sup> .07), and the model was significant, F(1, 130) = 8.77, p<.001.

Social inclusion was added in the regression model. Social inclusion significantly and positively predicted life satisfaction, fi = .34, t(130) = 4.05, p<.001. The unstandardized regression coefficient (B) showed that for every one unit increase in social inclusion, life satisfaction increases by .20 units. The contribution of social inclusion in explaining the variance in life satisfaction was 17% (change in R<sup>2</sup> = .17), and the model was also significant, FΔ (2, 126)

16.37, p<.001.

In step 3, resilience was added in the regression model. Resilience significantly and positively predicted life satisfaction, β = .60, t(2130) 6.53, p<.001. The unstandardized regression coefficient (B) showed that for every one unit increase in resilience, life satisfaction increases by .39 units. The contribution of resilience in explaining the variance in life satisfaction was 46% (change in R<sup>2</sup> = .46), and the model was also significant, FΔ (3, 125) = 8.09, p<.001. Overall, the β(.60) showed that resilience was a stronger predictor of life satisfaction in the present sample than social inclusion.

III. DISCUSSION

In the present study, the investigation was on social inclusion and resilience as predictors of life satisfaction among Niger Delta youths. The result of the study supported the hypothesis which was stated that social inclusion will significantly predict life satisfaction: (17%). This result replicates the

findings of previous studies (Moksens et al; 2022, Proctor et al; 2009, Bergman, 2017, De-Neve et al, 2013, Lyubomirsky et al; 2005 and Myers, 2000) on social inclusion and life satisfaction.

There has been dearth of literature on the study of life Satisfaction among youths in Nigeria and the few that have been done have not examined such psychological variables that may predict life satisfaction particularly among Niger Delta youths. Oladipo et al, (2013) found that there was an evidence of low satisfaction with life among undergraduates, Oladipo, et al., (2013). It also examined the influence of Social Support and family status on life satisfaction among undergraduates. A few studies have investigated demographic variables and their impact on life satisfaction among adolescents. A possible explanation for this could be that a culturally inclusive environment requires mutual understanding and agreement. Hence Veenhoven,(1995) theory asserts that people would be satisfied when life comes close to ideal and life satisfaction is not insensitive to change in living condition.

In addition, evaluations of life satisfaction are influenced by personal characteristics and collective orientation and as such, the theory assumes that the tendency to like or dislike life is part of a common life. Also Youniss(1994) suggests that, the accumulated history of belonging (or not belonging) to a social systems and social relations play important roles in the constitution of the young person's social identity. Where there is social identity, it will promote life satisfaction. Therefore, one way of improving life satisfaction among Niger Delta youths is by providing an unparalleled opportunity to improve their safety nets to better promote inclusion, livelihood and resilience. Safety nets such as proposing an agenda for reform and participation for moving forward, using global experience and evidence presented in resilience to crisis situation.

Therefore, youths should be empowered with tools to improve their lives, ensure ready and rapid temporary support in response to crises and giving them a greater voice to promote civic engagement and policy ownership.

Thus, public policy and community-based efforts should be geared towards involving Niger Delta youths in measuring full projects, increasing participation in problem identification, social problems solving and constructive social action (Ifeagwazi, et al., 2015).

In addition to the study the second hypothesis which stated that resilience will significantly predict life satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported. Consistent with the findings of previous studies. Since the hypothesis was supported, young people should be provided with appropriate environment which will develop resilience (Yildirim et al; 2017). This implies that resilience building programs should be implemented in order to ensure that youths enjoy a good standard of well-being and also have optimal quality of life in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. As proposed in resiliency model (Richardson 2002). Richardson et al; (2002) that

resiliency process is the experience of disrupted by stressors, challenge disappointments or adverse situations, and afterwards, (Ryff, 1989).

Similarly, building programs are more likely to be effective as it assists in cognitive behavioural adaptation to their challenges. As proposed in cognitive —behavioural theory of life satisfaction that cognitive transformation often signified enhanced adaptation to adverse circumstances and thus a marker of resilience (Tebes et al; 2004). Thus for Psychological growth and development, self determination theory, (Ryan 1995, Ryan et al; 2000, Ryan 2009). Even when people have no control over some life situations they can control how they respond to these experiences and they can do better with resilience (Warfield, 2011). This implies that high resilience may be manifested in greater perceptions of control over one's situation. In this light cognitive transformation by the Niger Delta people involves a reevaluation of their socioeconomic, political and interpersonal experiences in a way that promotes growth beyond their present level of psychosocial functioning.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Despite the enormous relevance of recognizing that inclusion and diversity have a unique complexities and meanings in different local, national and international context, there is a notable lack of empirical literature research on institutional policies for the role of social inclusion, resilience and psychological well-being in Nigeria. The lack of research on this topic in Nigeria is surprising considering that Nigeria is one of the developing countries, that the highest levels of indigenous population, influential traditional gender roles. Violent extremism and terrorism, and outrageous levels of poverty and inequality. These factors impact directly on the degree of access to social inclusion, and other resilience policies and Psychological well — being.

The life satisfaction of Niger Delta students is very important to the psychosocial development of the region because development revolves around human person. It may serve as a measure of the perceived human developmental environment in relation to shaping human identity and social relationships with other social relations on people's lives. Hence, the present study makes a significant primary contribution by being the first of its kind to examine the role of social inclusion, resilience and life satisfaction in Niger Delta sample.' The findings support previous research on life satisfaction, as they significantly predicted satisfaction.

Human tendency to develop and get better in spite of adversity needs to be taken into account in organization of human service for a sustainable development in Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Resilience is very important for youths. Resilience may be the critical aspect to focus on when developing programs to support youths in their Psychological health for sustainable development. Most importantly, social inclusion implies valued participation with valued people in valued activities that settings as a key to cutting crime and

anti-social behaviour in the face of stigmatization of deprivation.

Government agencies and advocacy groups that are concerned with decision making and policies will have to focus on how students should be equipped. However, special efforts which will make students to develop a positive adaptation in response to adversity should be provided.

Students should be equipped with adequate resources to participate fully in economic, social, and cultural life to enjoy a standard of well-being that is considered normal in the society in which we live. Students should develop a positive adaptation in response to adversity.

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