A Network Perspective on the Relationship between Life Satisfaction and Depression

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March 8, 2019
Goals

1. Introduce the Construct of Life Satisfaction (LS)
2. Review research on the relationship between LS and depression (D) and the clinical utility of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)
3. Present a “traditional” study of the relationship between LS and D
4. Present a network study of the relationship between LS and D symptoms
Life Satisfaction (or Satisfaction with Life)

1. Emerged in the 1980s

1. Refers to “a cognitive and global evaluation of the quality of one’s life as a whole” (Pavot & Diener, 2008).

1. Conceptualized as one component of the broader construct of subjective well-being or happiness (i.e., the judgement/cognitive component).

1. Most often assessed with the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).
Satisfaction with Life Scale

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
3. I am satisfied with my life.
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

1= Strongly disagree; 4 = Neither agree nor disagree; 7 = Strongly agree
Life Satisfaction and Depression

Correlations range from -.37 to -.57

It has been suggested that the assessment of life satisfaction in clinical settings could complement the traditional focus on distress and symptoms of dysfunction and that interventions should ideally increase positive experiences related to life satisfaction in addition to reducing distress.
Study 1: Methods

*Sample: Outpatients (N = 123) referred to psychiatrists at the Royal University Hospital

Age = 18-65 years of age
Primary Diagnoses = Depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, and/or adjustment disorder
Exclusion criteria = psychosis, bipolar disorder, eating disorder, substance abuse or dependence, somatoform disorders, ADAD, neurological disorders

Measures: Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; alpha = .86) and Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9; alpha = .87)

Analyses: SPSS and JASP

Descriptive Statistics

**Depression**
- none (0-4)
- minimal (5-9)
- mild (10-14)
- moderate (15-19)
- severe (20 plus)

**Satisfaction**
- extremely satisfied (31-35)
- satisfied (26-30)
- slightly satisfied (21-25)
- neutral (20)
- slightly dissatisfied (15-19)
- dissatisfied (10-14)
- extremely dissatisfied (5-9)
Satisfaction with Life Scale Scores by PHQ-9 Scores

$r = -.294$
$p = .001$
Do those with severe symptoms of depression ever report high life satisfaction?
Item 8: Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed or being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around more than usual
Further Evidence Regarding Item 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SWLS Item</th>
<th>Correlation with PHQ-9 Item 8</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In most ways my life is close to my ideal</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conditions of my life are excellent.</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with life.</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.</td>
<td>.21 (p = .024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.</td>
<td>.14</td>
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</tbody>
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Correlation Network
Network (EBICglasso)

Betweenness Centrality = relative number of shortest paths passing through a specific node.
PHQ-9 item 9: Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way.

SWLS item 3: I am satisfied with my life.
PHQ-9 item 6: Feeling bad about yourself-or that you’re a failure or have let yourself or your family down.

SWLS item 5: If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.
Limitations

Limited Edge Stability

Limited Centrality Stability
Conclusions and Future Directions

1. PHQ-9 is a poor measure (for network analyses).
2. It is easy to conduct a network analysis investigating D and LS (replicate!).
3. Network analysis can generate hypotheses about relationships between constructs.
4. Larger samples are required (are available).