
A REVIEW OF QUALITY OF LIFE DOMAINS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: TRENDS AND GAPS IN RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Due to globalization and modernization, the world is running out of time every single day. People have become technically advanced but they are struggling to manage their day-to-day tasks due to busy schedules and fixed 24 hours of the day. This has deteriorated their quality of life. Everyone wants to run a race of achieving more and more by compromising on the important aspects that determine the true quality in life. The study aims to review the researches carried out in different domains of quality of life (physical, psychological, social, emotional, health and environment), the number of studies conducted in each domain and the year-wise study of their number in different domains. The review analysis of 23 papers related to above domains was done. The findings of the study showed that the quality of life is a complex of all these domains, most focused domain of the study by researchers is the physical domain and the least focused domain is the emotional domain. The time period of 2020-2023 showed maximum number of studies done in almost all domains except emotional and health domain. The results of the study suggest that the researchers should focus more on emotional and health domain of students which are as important as other domains.

KEYWORDS: Quality of life, Physical, Psychological, Emotional, Health, Environment, Students, University.

INTRODUCTION

An important stage of human development is the pupil stage in which an individual begins as a learner and ends up with shaping into a person who can contribute to the society (Beniassa and Ahmed, 2022). The first and important step of socialization is learning. Learning has a

significant effect on the lives of students so it has become important to analyse the quality of life of pupils in an educational setting (Alwafa et al., 2024). An individual can contribute to the benefit of the society only if his/her own quality of life is good. By quality, one can think of goals, value, significance, achievement and contentment in life (Beniassa and Ahmed, 2022). The first concept about the quality of life was given by A. C. Pigou in his book regarding economic well-being in 1920 (Ruzevicius, 2007). At that time, the meaning of quality of life was related to having consumer goods like essential and precious things. Later on, this concept shifted towards satisfaction in life, self-realization, hopes, ambitions (Owczarek, 2010). The ancient Greek philosophers related meaning of life is to attain that higher state of existence (Owczarek, 2010). The term Quality is derived from the Latin word *qualis* means who? (Petrovic et al., 2025) The four dimensions for the good quality of life are livability of the environment, possibility of establishing social relations, self-awareness, ambitions and how one appreciates the quality of life internally (R. Veenhoven). Quality of Life is a complex and multidimensional structure that includes various components as a direct appraisal of human life. It refers to how an individual view and assess their overall life circumstances, considering their aspiration, ambitions, standard of living, cultural context and personal values. It comprehensively evaluates an individual's entire state of well-being, satisfaction across several aspects of life including physical and mental health, social connections, financial situation and the surrounding environment. It is intricately connected to overall satisfaction (Gur, 2024). Quality of life is conceptualized as an individual evaluation of overall life including physical and mental health (Wong et al., 2001). The World Health organization in the year 1994 has defined quality of life as "individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, living standards and interests. A model named Quality of School Life model has mentioned the role of teachers, relationship with peers, environment of school, academic stress in the quality of life. College life is different from school life. The level of stress university or college students have is different from other people (Marshall et al., 2008). The college or university level is a period of transition for these students. The pupils may have to abandon their homes, family persons and move to another city or town to get education (Wheaton, 1990). This can be related to Maslow's hierarchy needs theory which is both a subjective and objective approach related to the quality of life that explains the quality of life in relation to the fulfillment of basic human needs in a hierarchial manner: physiological needs, safety, love and belongingness, self esteem, and self actualization (Maslow, 1943). When the pupils leave their homes, friends

and family for the first time, the environment around them changes, they need to make new friends, college curriculum is different and they have to manage all things by themselves (Li and Zhong, 2022). Also, the period of adolescence and early adulthood are the periods of stress and storm where there are psychological, social, physical and sexual changes involved. They are developing new belief system and values. All such changes can have significant positive or negative impact on their quality of life (Ramón-Arbués et al.; 2022). During an academic year also, the stress can come not only from the academic curriculum but from personal problems, living place problems, financial circumstances also (Marshall et al., 2008). These factors can lead to mental problems and depressive symptoms among teenagers and young college going students (Klemenc-Ketis et al., 2011). There are several domains of quality of life that include- physical domain, material domain, psychological domain, education and self development domain, self expression domain, social relation domain and safety and environment domain (Ruzevicius, 2007). All these domains are significant to achieve a good quality of life. The one of the most important domain which can be affected by the transition period of adolescence is the psychological domain which in turn can hamper pupil's academic achievement, social life and overall quality of life. Another domain is physical domain, the changes in routine, food, sleep cycle, can negatively impact their quality of life (Aljawarneh et al., 2025). Extreme competitiveness in academics can create anxiety, burn out which can have effect on overall well being of the individual. Quality of life also depends on how an individual perceives one's own life, its cognitive and social aspect (Ruzevicius, 2007). The choice of stream or discipline also affects the quality of student's life (Naiyar et al.; 2023). Considering females, they have their own factors which can affect their life's quality like hormonal imbalance, menstrual cycle, gender roles (Bajpai et al., 2025). To assess the quality of life in university students is an important issue so as to develop a future of young leaders who enjoy good life and raise good leaders. The learners with good quality of life can excel in academics and professional life (Lalitha et al., 2024). The higher educational institutions selected by learners are an important place which shapes their future. These institutions affect the student's quality of life in relation to its physical environment, infrastructure, socio-cultural facilities, administration, policies and overall experience (Gur, 2024). The quality in life depends on how good are the person's relationships, health, physical, emotional and social aspects. A person having good quality of life often makes better choices in life whether academic, professional or personal. The study of quality of life of university students is significant as it helps to identify the challenges faced by the students in academically, financially and socially which in turn could affect their academic growth,

performance and overall personality development. By understanding the student's quality of life, educational institutions can make better policies, develop targeted support systems to enhance the motivation and success of students, reducing dropout rates and creating a healthier, supportive and inclusive learning environment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze each dimension of quality of life.
2. To search for the most researched domain for the quality of life.
3. To analyze the number of different studies conducted year wise for the different domains of the quality of life.

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

The main objective of the study is to explore the various dimensions of quality of life and find out the trends of these domains in the selected years. All the research work published on scientific platforms like Google, PubMed, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Semantic Scholar which specifically focused on the quality of life were considered for the study. Keywords showing words like quality, life, physical, emotional, psychological, social, health were used to search for the research papers for the quality of life. After the exclusion criteria some studies were not considered and Review analysis was done consisting of 29 research papers using different databases. Random studies were included from the year 2008 to 2025. These studies have covered different areas to assess the quality of life of college students. The research papers corresponding to the area of research were included and others were excluded from the study. Data was then analyzed according to the objectives framed.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The literature review revealed that majority of the studies conducted on the psychological, physical and socio-economic aspect of life. The analysis of the studies on Quality of Life (QOL) has shown that for university students, QOL is not only a measure of health and satisfaction but also a determinant of academic performance, motivation, and long-term personal development. Studies across diverse contexts consistently highlight stress, sleep quality, physical activity, financial independence, and social relationships as critical influences on QOL. While psychological and social domains often emerge as the strongest predictors of overall well-being, physical and environmental dimensions reveal significant variations depending on lifestyle, institutional settings, and demographic characteristics. Exploring these interconnected domains provides valuable insights into how universities can

foster healthier, more supportive environments that enhance both academic success and personal growth.

Table 1 – Review analysis of quality of life.

Domain	Author	Variables	Results
Physical, psychological, social and environmental	Malkoc (2011), Kadir et al. (2020), Abdullah et al. (2021), Alnoshokaty et al. (2023)	Quality of life domains, associated factors	Overall QOL shows positive well-being, with physical domain varying among student athletes. Psychological & social domains are important followed by environmental and physical domain.
Psychological and physical	Ribeiro et al. (2017), Li and Zhong (2022), Ramon-arbues et al. (2022), Alwafa et al. (2024)	Stress, quality of life, factors, predictors	Stress, lack of sleep, and burnout reduce Quality of Life along with deterioration of physical and psychological health; age is inversely associated with quality of life, good sleep, self-esteem, and academic satisfaction improve quality of life, with lower scores for physical domain followed by psychological domain.
Health	Marshall et al. (2008), Klemenc-Ketis et al. (2011), Nur et al. (2017), Wagner et al. (2025)	Stress, Quality of life, Factors, Health related quality of life	High stress, mental disorders, chronic pain and migration lowers HRQOL significantly affecting psychological domain; place of residence, smoking, pocket money, body mass index significantly associated with HRQOL.
Physical	Lemos et al. (2014), Cicek (2018), Cheah et al. (2021)	Quality of life, factors, undergraduate students, environment, physical health and parent income, ethnicities and religion.	Acute and chronic pain, hours per week of classroom negatively associated with quality of life; physical activity shows positive association with quality of life; significant differences in the quality of life found on the basis of environment, physical health, parent income, ethnicities and religion.
Psychological and health	Fernandes and lemos (2024),	Qol, health, perception, learning, motivation,	Adolescents with better mental health showed better

	Bajpai et al. (2025)	behaviour of adolescents, female college students	quality of life along with greater motivation to learn; menstrual health issues and psychological distress influence daily functioning, academic performance and social relationships in females.
Emotional	Alibabaie (2015)	Quality of life, emotional intelligence, life satisfaction	Positive correlation of emotional intelligence and quality of life; significant correlation of life satisfaction with quality of life and no association with emotional intelligence.
Socio-physical	Gur (2024)	Student quality of life, university	Most to least impact of sub dimensions on students' quality of life are satisfaction with campus life, education spaces, academic development, social-physical amenities, social perception, administrative management, accessibility, transportation and accommodation.
Environment, physical and social	Photiwat and silphiphat (2023), Naiyar et al.(2023)	Factors, quality of life, undergraduate students, medical students	Environmental, physical and social QOL shows moderate scores with social domain lowest in university; quality of life vary among different types of universities; quality of life is affected by medical studies, due to academic stress, limited leisure and socialization, disordered eating habits; financial dependence significantly negatively affect QOL.
Physical, Psychological and social	Yang and Fan (2017), Mahin et al. (2025)	Quality of life , learning, factors	Quality of life is crucial for learning, academic achievements; quality of sleep, diet, peer relationships, time management, low self esteem, lack of exercise significantly associated with quality of life domains especially physical, psychological and social domains.

Objective wise analysis

The first objective of the study was to analyze each dimension of the quality of life. The table suggests that the quality of life is a multidimensional concept which covers domains like physical, social, environment, psychological and health domain. Among these domains the psychological domain shows lower scores in every studies as compared to other domains. There are several factors which are associated with lower scores of psychological domain which includes factors like stress, workload, sleep problems and anxiety level which ultimately affect quality of life. The table also shows positive attitude and routine in life like proper sleep, satisfaction in life and high self-esteem are positively co-related with with good academic performance. The table suggests that the physical health is important and shows a positive relationship with quality of life.

In terms of social factors, positive peer relationships, supportive teachers, interaction with others shows positive relationship with quality of life. The environmental domain also shows a significant relation with quality of life like positive institutional environment, good infrastructure, place of residence also improves quality of life. Socio-economic factors and socio-demographic factors like gender, finances, immigration or emigration also have significant relationship with quality of life.

The other important domain that impacts quality of life is health domain. Individuals who have stress, chronic health conditions, mental conditions have negative relationship with quality of life. Also emotional intelligence of an individual also influences how well an individual can handle and manage his/her daily tasks and how much satisfaction and enjoyment one gets in life. Menstrual health in females also contribute towards their quality of life.

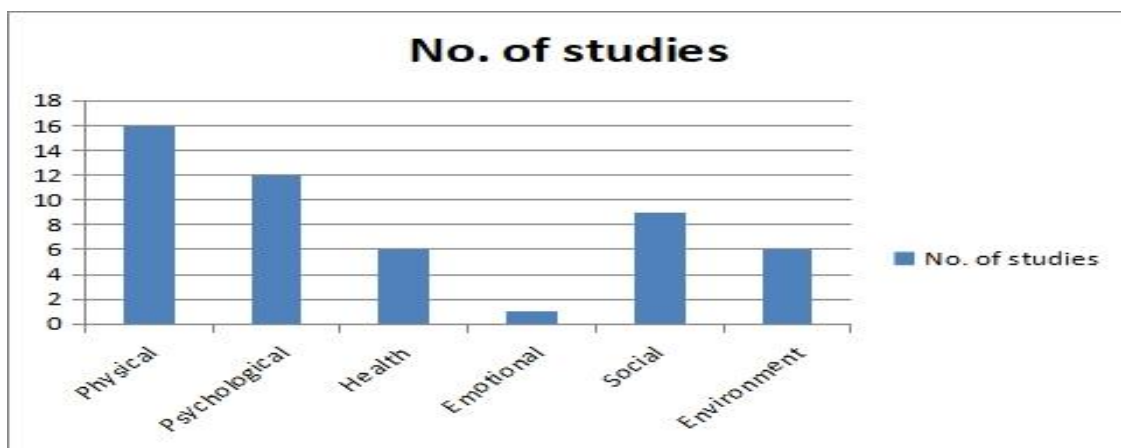


Figure 1– Graph of no. of studies conducted in each domain of quality of life.

The second objective of the study was to search for the most researched domain for the quality of life. The graph shows that the highest number of studies was conducted in the physical domain which are 16 in number. This suggests that the most researched domain to analyze the quality of life is the physical domain as it is easily observable and can be easily quantified.

The next domain which is mostly researched and comes after physical domain is psychological domain under which 12 studies conducted. This suggests proper concern of researchers towards mental health of students.

The next domain that comes after psychological domain is social domain, 09 in number. The social domain is not so frequently researched domain. This domain holds importance for deciding the quality of life but is less studied.

Health and environment domain have equal number of studies, 06 in number, which again shows less studied areas for university students.

The least researched domain for the quality of life is emotional domain with only 01 study. This area needs to be researched more as emotional domain is as important as other domains.

Table 2- showing no. of studies conducted year wise in each domain of quality of life.

Year	Domains					
	Physical	Psychological	Social	Emotional	Health	Environment
2008-2011	1	1	1	0	2	1
2012-2015	1	0	0	1	0	0
2016-2019	3	2	1	0	1	0
2020-2023	8	5	5	0	0	5
2024-2026	3	4	2	0	3	0

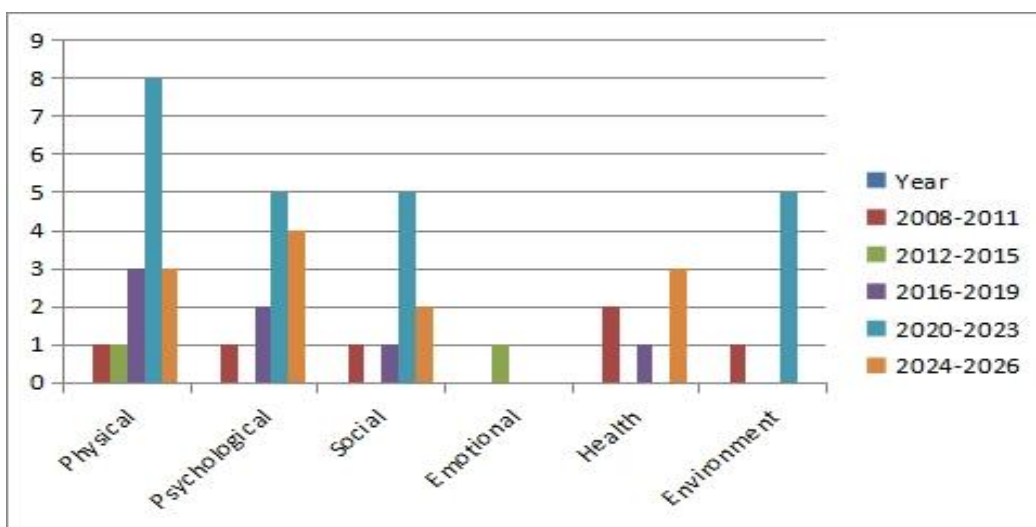


Figure 2: Graph showing no. of studies conducted year wise in each domain of quality of life.

The next objective was to analyze the number of different studies conducted year wise for the different domains of the quality of life. The graph shows the comparison of 06 domains of quality of life –physical, psychological, social, emotional, health, environment. The timeline from 2008-2026 was divided into intervals (2008-2011, 2012-2015, 2016-2019, 2020-2023, 2023-2026). The graph shows an increasing trend of studies in most domains mostly from 2020-2023. The physical domain shows an equal number of studies from the period 2008-2011 and 2012-2015, 01 in number, with increasing trend from 2016-2019 (03) to 2020-2023 (08). The number declined (03) in 2024-2026. The psychological domain study shows increasing trend from 2008-2011 (01), 2012-2015 (00), 2016-2019 (2) to 2020-2023 (05). The number again decline to 04 in 2024-2026. The almost similar trend follows in social domain starting from 2008-2011 (01), 2012-2015 (00), 2016-2019 (01), to 2020-2023 (05). The number again dropped in 2024-2026 (02). Emotional domain shows consistent lowest scores (00) in all years with only 01 score in the year 2012-2015. Health domain shows fluctuations throughout all years, starting from number 02 in the year 2008-2011, (00) in 2012-2015, 01 in 2016-2019, (00) in 2020-2023 and (03) in 2024-2026. The environment domain shows a flat pattern upto 2016-2019 (01, in 2008-2011; (00) from 2012-2015; 2016-2019) but peaks in 2020-2023 (05) and again falls in 2024-2026 (00).

The study shows that the quality of life is multidimensional concept that include several domains like physical, psychological, social, emotional, environmental and health. Most of the studies are conducted in the physical domain, followed by the psychological domain. The lowest studies are conducted in the emotional domain. Social, environmental and health domain shows moderate number of studies. The period of 2020-2023 shows a significant year with maximum number of studies done in almost all domains except emotional and health domain. The time period of 2020-2023 shows maximum number of studies for physical dimension of quality of life with almost same number for psychological, social, environmental dimension. The lowest number remains for emotional and health dimensions of the quality of life in this time period.

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