The Effects of Self-Perceived Intelligence on Life Satisfaction Differentiated by Gender

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Research Questions
- Does life satisfaction level differ between people depending on their self-perceived intelligence?
- Does the association vary by gender?

Significance
- Life satisfaction is an important indicator of quality of life and well-being (Moksnes & Espnes, 2013).
- Life satisfaction can be influenced by self-esteem and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Kang, Shaver, Sue, Min, & Jing, 2003).

Background
- Self-perceived intelligence is one aspect of self-esteem (Moksnes & Espnes, 2013).
- Higher self-esteem is related to higher life satisfaction (Moksnes & Espnes, 2013).
- Males have reported higher and more stable self-esteem levels and higher self-perceived intelligence than females (Palmer, Donaldson, & Stough, 2002).
- Personality trait differences account for gender differences in self-perceived intelligence (Furnham & Buchanon, 2005).

Hypothesis
- People with higher self-perceived intelligence will have a higher level of life satisfaction.
- The association will be greater for women than men.

Data and Sample
- National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health)
- Wave 3 (2001-2002) public data (N = 4882)
- U.S. young adults aged 18-28

Dependent Measure
- Life Satisfaction
  "How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?"
  - 0 = Very satisfied or satisfied 84.4%
  - 1 = Very Dissatisfied, dissatisfied or indifferent 15.6%

Independent Measure
- Self-Perceived Intelligence
  "Compared to other people your age, how intelligent are you?"
  - 0 = Average or below average 39.5%
  - 1 = Above average 60.5%

Analysis
- Cross tabulation and Chi-square using SPSS

Results

Figure 1. Percentage reporting Life Satisfaction levels by Self-Perceived Intelligence (SPI)

Note. Chi-square test is significant at p < .01

Figure 2. Percentage reporting Life Satisfaction levels by Self-Perceived Intelligence (SPI) by Gender

Note: Chi-square tests are not significant for men but significant for women at p < .001.

Summary of Findings
- As hypothesized, higher self-perceived intelligence levels are more likely to be satisfied with their life.
- As hypothesized, females who considered their intelligence "above average" reported higher life satisfaction percentages than above average intelligence males.
- The effect of self-perceived intelligence on life satisfaction for males was not statistically significant.

Policy Implications
- Increased focus on building self-perceived intelligence confidence when treating patients with lower life satisfaction would be warranted.
- Focus on self-perceived intelligence should be more emphasized with females than males.

References