



A Study of Happiness Among College Students of Udhampur

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Abstract:

Happiness, an essential component of subjective well-being, significantly influences students' academic achievement and psychological health. The present study investigates the level of happiness among college students in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir, with reference to gender, locality, and marital status. A sample of 200 students (100 males and 100 females) was selected through simple random sampling from government and private colleges. The Happiness Scale developed by R.L. Bhardwaj and Poonam R. Das was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Chi-square test. The results indicated no significant differences in happiness with respect to gender, locality, or their interaction. Additionally, marital status was not significantly associated with happiness. The findings suggest that demographic variables may not play a decisive role in determining happiness among college students. Implications for educational practice and future research are discussed.

Keywords: *Happiness, subjective well-being, college students, gender differences, ANOVA*

1. Introduction

Happiness, commonly conceptualized as subjective well-being, refers to a state of positive emotional experience combined with life satisfaction. It includes the presence of positive affect, absence of negative emotions, and cognitive evaluation of life. In recent years, the study of happiness has gained prominence in psychology and education due to its strong relationship with academic performance, mental health, and social functioning.

College students represent a critical population as they undergo significant developmental transitions. Academic demands, peer relationships, and future uncertainties can influence their emotional well-being. Understanding happiness in this context is important for promoting positive educational outcomes. Although previous research has examined various determinants of happiness, the role of demographic variables such as gender, locality, and marital status remains inconclusive. Therefore, the present study aims to examine these variables among college students in Udhampur.

2. Concept of happiness

Happiness is a state of mind or feeling such as contentment, satisfaction, pleasure or joy. Philosophers and religious thinkers have often defined happiness in terms of living a good life or flourishing rather than simply as an emotion. Defining a personal matter such as individual happiness can be a tricky thing because happiness is, more than anything else, a very private concern that cannot be ascertained from the outside. Human beings are complex organisms, an adequate construction of the idea of human wellbeing (happiness) must also be complex. Someone who, according to specific norms of leading a good life, ought to be very happy, does not have to feel happy. Many hidden factors may be influencing this person. It all depends on whether an individual feels that he or she is happy. Happiness will be defined as the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his or her life-as-a-whole favourably (Veenhoven, 1984). Webster's Dictionary defines happiness as, "an agreeable feeling or condition of the soul arising from good fortune or propitious happening of any kind; the possession of those circumstances

or that state of being which is attended enjoyment; the state of being happy; contentment; joyful satisfaction; felicity; blessedness.” The term happiness captures a huge variety of positive emotional responses, including such things as cheerfulness, serenity, optimism, and joy. Happiness has also been defined as “the preponderance of positive affect over negative affect with a distinct focus on the affective evaluation of one’s life situation” (Diener, 1984). According to Hills and Argyle (2001), happiness is a multidimensional construct comprising both emotional and cognitive elements. Three main components of happiness have been identified: frequent positive affect or joy, a high average level of satisfaction over a period, and the absence of negative feelings such as depression and anxiety (Argyle & Grossland, 1987). ‘Happiness’ as an Aristotelian eudaimonia or general well being involving in his phrase, “living well and doing well” can be characterized by enjoying goods of the mind (e.g. wisdom, moral virtue and pleasure), goods of the body (e.g., physical beauty, health) and external goods (e.g. wealth and adequate material resources), good parents and families, good friends, peace and security within and between communities, and well governed communities. Happiness is often taken to mean something very close to an extended feeling of pleasure or an extended good mood or pleasant affect. In her book, *The How of Happiness* (2008), positive psychology researcher Lyubomirsky elaborates, describing happiness as “the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well being combined with a sense that one’s life is good, meaningful and worthwhile”. Michalos (1991) summarized the Profile of a happy person as one who is likely to have low levels of fear, hostility, tension, anxiety, guilt and anger, high degrees of energy, vitality and activity, a high level of self-esteem and an emotionally stable personality, a strong social orientation, healthy, satisfying, warm love and social relationships, an actively lifestyle with meaningful work; and to be relatively optimistic, worry-free, present oriented and well-directed.

3. Significance of the Study

The college students’ happiness is important because in this period of life, different events and transitions may influence their overall development. In a college student’s life, happiness is related to positive outcomes in multiple life domains, such as academics, health and relationship with parents, teachers and peers and is associated with better possibilities for development of bodily, social and mental skills. Happiness, in the form of joy, appears in every typology of “basic” human emotions. Being happy is of great importance to most people, and happiness has been found to be a highly valued goal in most societies.

4. Statement of the Problem

The problem for the present study has been entitled as “A Study of Happiness among College Students of Udhampur”

5. Operational Definitions

Definitions of the terms which are used in the present study are defined operationally as under.

5.1 Happiness

Happiness refers to a range of the balance of positive and pleasant emotions joy pride, contentment, gratitude and living with ethics. It is also used interchangeably with subjective wellbeing Happiness an experience combined with a sense that one’s life is good meaningful and worthwhile (Lyubomirsky 2001) which is somewhat different from pleasure. Pleasure gives happiness and to become happy to experience pleasure.

5.2 Contentment

It is an emotional state of satisfaction that can be seen as a mental state maybe drawn from being at ease in one’s situation, body and mind. Colloquially speaking, contentment could be a state of having accepted one’s situation and is a milder and more tentative form of happiness. Contentment and the pursuit of contentment are possibly a central thread many philosophers or religious schools across diverse cultures.

6. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the difference in happiness between male and female college students.

2. To study the difference in happiness between rural and urban students.
3. To analyze the interaction effect of gender and locality on happiness.
4. To examine the relationship between marital status and happiness.

7. Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no significant difference in happiness between male and female students.

H₀₂ There is no significant difference in happiness between rural and urban students.

H₀₃ There is no significant interaction effect of gender and locality on happiness.

H₀₄ There is no significant relationship between marital status and happiness.

8. Methodology

8.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design.

8.2 Sample

The sample comprised 200 college students from Udhampur, selected through simple random sampling, ensuring equal representation of gender.

8.3 Instrument

The Happiness Scale developed by Bhardwaj and Das was used. The scale consists of 28 items with acceptable reliability (0.71–0.79) and validity (0.84–0.88).

8.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using:

- Two-way ANOVA
- Chi-square test

9. Results

The findings of the study are summarized as follows:

- No significant difference in happiness between male and female students ($F = 0.09, p > 0.05$).
- No significant difference in happiness between rural and urban students ($F = 0.03, p > 0.05$).
- No significant interaction effect of gender and locality ($F = 2.69, p > 0.05$).
- No significant association between marital status and happiness ($\chi^2 \approx 0.25, p > 0.05$).

10. Discussion

The findings indicate that demographic variables such as gender, locality, and marital status do not significantly influence happiness among college students. This supports earlier research suggesting that happiness is more closely related to psychological and environmental factors.

The uniformity in happiness levels may be attributed to shared academic environments and similar socio-cultural conditions. It also highlights the importance of internal factors such as personality traits, emotional stability, and social support systems.

11. Conclusion

The study concludes that happiness among college students is not significantly affected by gender, locality, or marital status. It suggests that interventions aimed at improving student well-being should focus more on psychological and environmental factors rather than demographic characteristics.

12. Limitations

- Limited sample size
- Restricted geographical area
- Use of a single measurement tool

- Lack of testing of statistical assumptions

13. Suggestions for Future Research

- Include larger and more diverse samples
- Examine psychological variables such as stress and resilience
- Conduct comparative and longitudinal studies
- Use mixed-method approaches

References

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