PERSONAL CORRELATES OF HAPPINESS – STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *The young generation in India faces so much chaos in their personal, social, as well as professional lives. Parents, media, politicians, educationists, and so on are targeting them without understanding the real wishes and dreams of the youth. The education provided, without knowing the real state of the problem, can be dangerous for them. One should understand their wants and also understand who is responsible for the same. In the same view, the present study is an attempt to observe the level of happiness among students and also try to find the correlates of the happiness level. The 29-item OHQ (Hills and Argyle 2002) structured questionnaire has been used for data collection. A total of 236 questionnaires were administered and 206 students filled the questionnaire with accuracy. Therefore, the sample size was 206. Independent sample t-test and ANOVA have been used for analyses. The results show that the students' happiness level does not change with their residential comfort, qualification, academic score, and usage of gadgets; however, the level differs with gender and relationship status.*

Keywords: *Happiness, Relation, Student, Gender*

INTRODUCTION

Happiness is currently defined as a predominance of positive over negative effects, and as satisfaction with life as a whole (Argyle, Martin & Crossland, 1989; Diener). According to Limbasiya (2015), happiness lies in the material world, a painless body, sensual experience, healthy mental state, intellectual understanding, spiritual experience, and the sudden decision-making power of the mind. According to Diener (1984), happiness, defined as the "experience of positive affect coupled with high life satisfaction", has a positive effect on work, interpersonal relations, and health. Happy people enjoy professional and interpersonal benefits such as enhanced creativity, broader perspective, more friends, and lower divorce rates. Happy people also exhibit better immune functioning (Stone et al., 1994), have more energy (Csikszentmihalyi & Wong, 1991), and tend to live longer. The World Happiness Index says that four countries have been on the top spot in the last consecutive four reports: Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, and now Finland. All the top countries tend to have high values for all six of the key variables identified to support well-being: income, healthy life expectancy, social support, freedom, trust, and generosity.

According to the recent report, India was ranked 140 on the United Nation's latest World Happiness Report that gauged 156 countries, a decline of seven steps from the last edition of the survey. India has experienced vital decline in happiness level in 2005-08. India was ranked on various gauges, such as social support (142), freedom (41), corruption (73), generosity (65), GDP (103), and healthy life expectancy (103). There is a need to work on this, both by the government as well as society.

The young generation in India faces so much chaos in their personal, social, as well as professional lives. Lack of support from parents and society and lack of freedom to make choices may lead to poor decision making. Parents, media, politicians, educationists, and so on are targeting them without understanding the trues wishes and dreams of the youth. The education provided, without knowing the real state of the problem, can be dangerous for them. One should understand their wants and also understand who is responsible for the same. In the same view, the present study is an attempt to observe the level of happiness of students and also try to find the correlates of the happiness level.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Allport (1961) stated that "personality is a dynamic organisation of psychophysical systems within the person that creates the person's distinctive patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours".

Happiness is that mental state that results from having one's values realised.

It is not a long-lasting, enduring characteristic or personality attribute; rather, it is a more transient, fluctuating state (Courtney E. Ackerman).

Many researches have been conducted to see the predictors of happiness. Gender, cultural values, origin, and marital status have been identified as important aspects of happiness. Hori (2017) found gender differences in the determinants of happiness in East Asian countries. The results show that marital status is an important gauge of happiness for males in East Asian countries, although the same is not true for females in this region. Another important gauge found is full-time employment, which is certainly linked with men's happiness in China, but negatively related with women's in Japan. Social support plays an important role in increasing the happiness level among females in East Asian countries.

Chui and Wong (2016) studied the association of gender with happiness and life satisfaction through relationship style and self-concept in Hong-Kong. While self-esteem and objectives in life are linked with happiness and life satisfaction, having more close acquaintances is associated to higher happiness, but not necessarily life satisfaction. On the other hand, boys with higher educational attainment are happier, but not satisfied; the opposite holds true for girls. Crowley (2014) analysed and compared the happiness level of males and females with respect to their level of contempt. Among the male, higher the level of contempt, higher the level of happiness; however, for female, the opposite is true.

Demir (2013) investigated empirical issues by testing a mediational model positing that friendship quality would mediate the relationship between capitalisation and happiness among U.S. and Turkish college students. Although the psychosocial well-being of the U.S. respondents were considerably higher than that of the Turkish participants, the proposed model was sustained in both the U.S. and the Turkish groups. This suggests that part of the reason capitalisation is connected with happiness is because of acquaintance experiences. Lu & Shih (1997b) argued that cultural values can be a major force in determining the conception of happiness, and consequently, in constricting its subjective experiences. In a qualitative study of causes of happiness among the Chinese in Taiwan, researchers found an indication of the distinctive features of the Chinese conception of happiness described earlier – in particular, harmony of interpersonal relationships, achievement at work, and contentment with life. Lu et al. (2001) revealed that men and women did not differ on overall happiness; however, the women scored higher than the men on several dimensions of happiness. In single-culture studies, women

have sometimes had a slight advantage in terms of reporting higher happiness than men. In addition, British students had higher scores for happiness than the Taiwanese students.

Becker (2022) analysed a U-shaped upward-pointing branch that shows the pleasure of Europeans aged 50 and older throughout several waves. The study finds that happiness first rises beyond the age of 50, but typically stagnates after and eventually reverts at an older age, which is consistent with a U-shape around middle age. This pattern is typically seen regardless of the happiness measures, control variables, and estimate techniques used, or regardless of taking selection effects caused by mortality into account. The intensity of this pattern, though, is dependent on the control variables, mortality effects, and the happiness measure used. Not all nations exhibit the overall trend, and women are not always subject to it.

Shireen and Thomas (2021) found relationships between personality and happiness among college students across gender. Data has been collected through Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised – Abbreviated, Subjective Happiness Inventory (General Happiness Scale) and data analysis showed that there is no relationship between personality traits and happiness. There is a significant difference in the level of psychoticism among college students across gender. There is no significant difference in the level of neuroticism, extraversion, and happiness among college students across gender. Based on these results, personality does not provide any context in which happiness operates.

In the study by Jaskulska (2022), happiness among teenagers in Europe is correlated with dating violence victimisation. The findings point to the significance of developing a happy, healthy, and romantic relationship during adolescence, the value of seeking out social support, and the need for educational treatments that emphasise the improvement of problem-solving abilities.

Veenhoven (2008) revealed that all humans tend to appraise how much they like the life they live. In appraising life we draw on how well we feel in the first place, which in its turn draws on how well our universal human needs are gratified. The overall appraisal of one's life draws less on cognitive comparison with cultural standards of the good life. Consequently, conditions for happiness appear to be quite similar across the world. The consequences of enjoying life are also largely universal. There is more cultural variation in the valuation of happiness and in beliefs about conditions for happiness. The greatest variation is to be found in how happy people are.

Dfarhud (2014) conducted a study to identify biological variables that contribute to happiness. According to the

findings of studies on hereditary influences, genetics have an average impact of 35 to 50 per cent on happiness. Despite the challenges in locating specific genes, a number of genes were allocated to emotion and mood. According to studies on the nervous system, the amygdala, hippocampal region, and limbic system, among other brain regions, as well as neurotransmitters including dopamine, serotonin, norepinephrine, and endorphins, are involved in the regulation of happiness. A few studies suggested that the pituitary gland, the adrenal gland, and the hormones oxytocin and cortical have a part in regulating happiness. Therefore, physical health has a big part in happiness. Therefore, based on prior studies, it can be said that biological and health variables are crucial in underlying happiness, and their role in happiness is undeniable.

Hashim and Zaharam (2020) examined how socio-demographic factors and everyday events are related to an adolescent's happiness in Malaysia. A total of 1,766 adolescents from 20 secondary schools in peninsular Malaysia participated in the study to analyse effects of gender, ethnicity, religion, and location on happiness. The study revealed that household income, income of father, education of father, education of mother, and academic performance were significantly associated with the adolescent's happiness. An analysis of the everyday events that were reported to induce happiness suggested that these events as related to domains considered salient in an adolescent's life, including family, friends, and school. Everyday events are also related to intentional activities. The findings provide a better understanding of the key demographic factors and everyday events that contribute to happiness of adolescents in Malaysia. The findings particularly suggest the importance of intentional activities in increasing happiness among adolescents.

The literature supports that there is a difference between male and female happiness level in all the contexts of the world due to various reasons. Support from family, friends, satisfaction at work place, and life's achievements are important predictors of the happiness level of human beings.

RESEARCH GAP

According to the World Happiness Index 2019, India ranks itself at 140 in happiness out of 156 countries. In other words, it is at the bottom 10% of all countries. Also there has been a steady deterioration in Indians' happiness scores in recent years. In addition, very few researches were conducted targeting the youth. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to observe the happiness level of young college students.

DATA COLLECTION AND METHOD

The 29-item OHQ (Hills & Argyle, 2002) questionnaire that employs a five-point Likert scale response format, from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5, with the higher scores corresponding to higher levels of happiness, is used. There are 12 negatively worded items that require reverse coding before calculating the total happiness score, which is a sum of the individual item scores. The questionnaire has been modified and demographic variables, such as students' residential status, gender, qualification, last two years' academic performance, gadget usage, and their relationship status have been added, to study the happiness level of students. A total of 236 questionnaires were administered; 206 students filled the questionnaire with accuracy. Therefore, the sample size was 206. Independent sample t-test and ANOVA have been used for analyses.

Hypotheses

- H_{01} – Students' happiness level differs with their residential comfort.
- H_{02} – Students' happiness level differs with gender.
- H_{03} – Students' happiness level differs with their qualification.
- H_{04} – Students' happiness level differs with their academic performance.
- H_{05} – Students' happiness level differs with their usage of hi-tech gadgets.
- H_{06} – Students' happiness level differs with their relationship status.

RESULTS

The results show that students' happiness level does not change with residential status, as t = 0.223 and p = .824 > .05. Students stay with their parents, in a hostel or a PG, or with relatives. This has no relation with their happiness level. Gender plays a significant role in the happiness level. The result shows that level of happiness is significantly higher in male students than female students, as t = 2.792 and p = .007 < .05. Happiness level does not change with qualification and usage of gadgets, as t = 0.079 and p = 0.937 > .05 and t = 1.008 and p = 0.317 > .05, respectively. However, level of happiness changes with their relationship status. The result shows that students with a girlfriend or boyfriend show a higher level of happiness than students who are not in a relationship, as t = 3.186 and p =

.002 < .05. To see whether students' happiness level changes with their academic performance, the academic score at three levels were compared by ANOVA. The result shows no significant difference in their happiness level, as F = 1.159 and p = .319 > .05.

CONCLUSION

The present study identifies variables which have an impact on a student's happiness level. The study concludes that students' happiness levels do not change with their residential comfort, although students who are staying with their parents show a higher happiness score than those living in hostels or a PG. The level of happiness significantly changes with gender. Male students are happier in this stage of life than female students. According to recent statistics, women's happiness has been declining for the past 30 years. Research further shows that women are twice as likely to experience depression compared to men. However, a contradiction is found in the study conducted by Parmar and Vyas (2018), where the results indicate that there is a significant difference in the happiness levels of adolescent girls and boys. The new era girls are significantly happier than boys, because they enjoy the same educational and career opportunities as boys. Gender differences in depression are well established, and studies have found that biological, psychological, and social factors contribute to the disparity. It can also be concluded from the analysis that there is no difference in the happiness level of undergraduate and postgraduate students, although minor differences have been observed, where undergraduate students showed a higher level of happiness. This may be due to age, maturity, and stress of a career or jobs. Previous academic performance and usage of hi-tech gadgets/android phones do not make any difference in students' happiness level. Interestingly, however, happiness level changed with the relationship status. Students with friends of the opposite gender do have a higher level of happiness. Many studies support this result, as having close friends increases the happiness level. As students share their stress and problems with friends and spend good quality time with each other, it leads to a decrease in their stress level and an increase in their happiness level.

Happiness is considered to be one of the ultimate goals of life. This paper studies the happiness level of Indian college and university students aged between 17 and 24 years. It attempts to answer whether and to what extent the happiness of a student is significantly related to aspects of social life, such as time spent with family, friends, being in a relationship, logging onto social networking sites; academic factors, such as job prospects of the chosen field of study and academic environment; and other personal factors, such

as health condition, over-thinking or dwelling on past bad memories, and so on.

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Table 1

Group Statistics and Independent Sample T-test					
	Residence	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**t**	**Sig**
Happiness score	With Parents	114	21.3612	0.223	0.824
	PG/Hostel	112.789	17.0964		
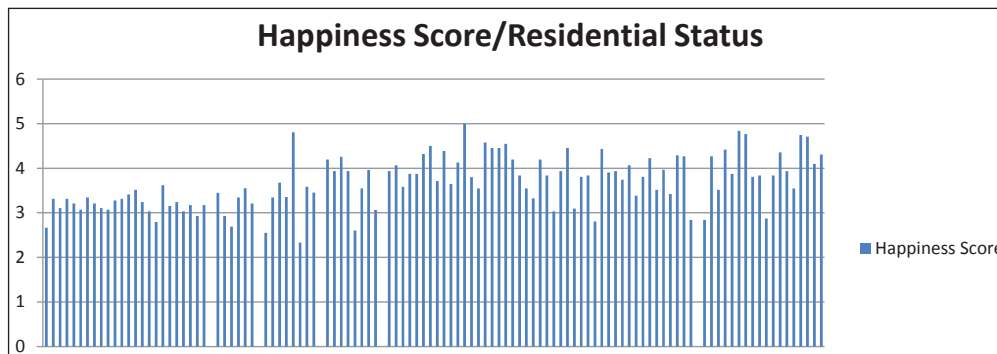
Fig. 1

Table 2

	Gender	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**t**	**Sig**
Happiness score	Male	121.333	23.0077	2.792	0.007*
	Female	108.659	16.8467		
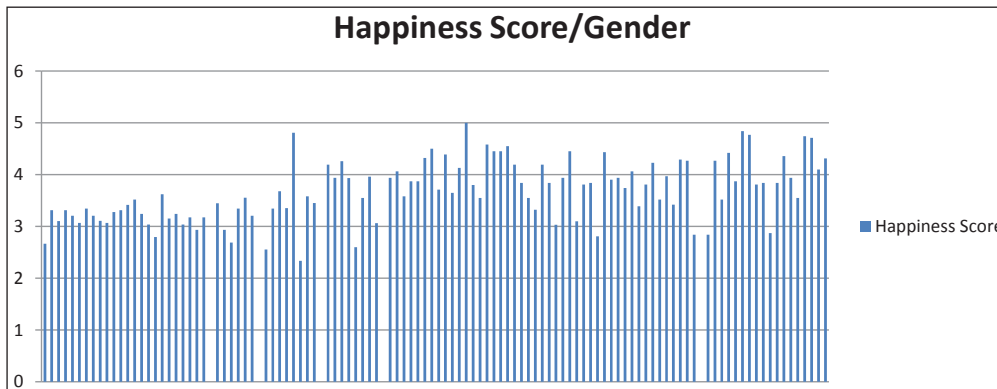
Fig. 2

Table 3

	Qualification	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig
Happiness score	UG	114.262	18.0488	0.079	0.937
	PG	113.882	23.8769		

Happiness Score/Qualification
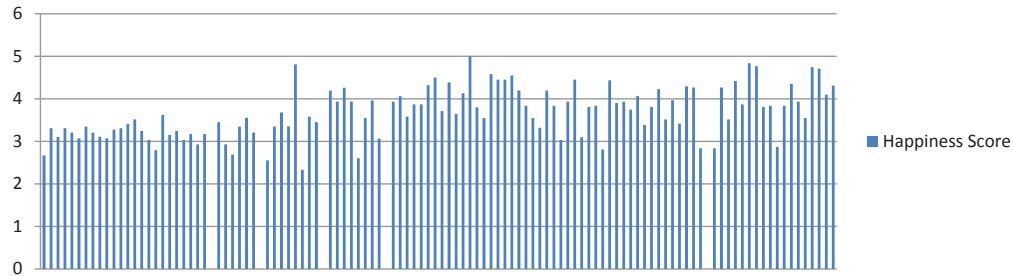
Fig. 3

Table 4

	Gadget	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig
Happiness score	Yes	114.644	20.0793	1.008	0.317
	No	104	30.0777		

Happiness Score/Gadgets
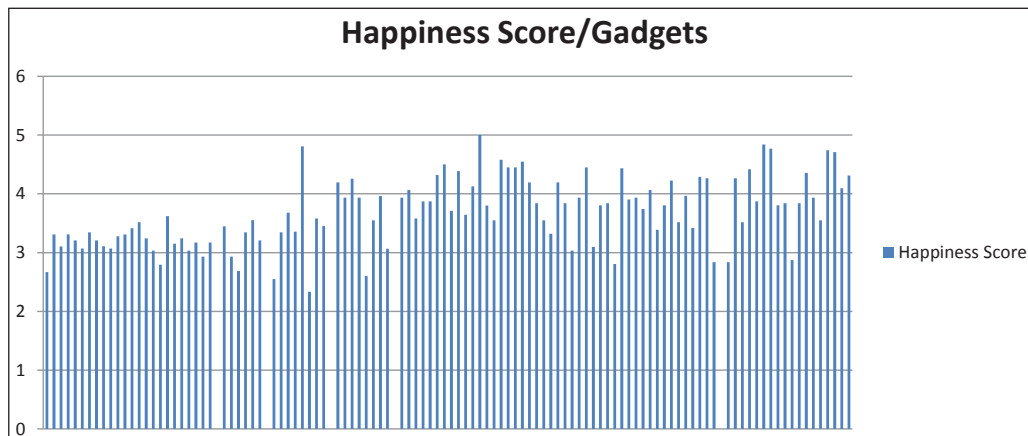
Fig. 4

Table 5

	Relationship	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig
Happiness score	Yes	126.895	13.2661	3.186	0.002*
	No	110.273	21.3007		
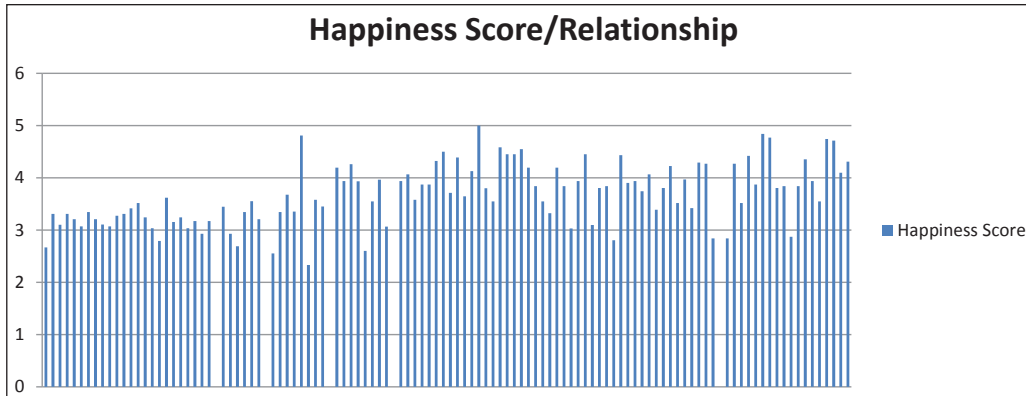
Fig. 5

Table 6

Group Statistics and ANOVA					
	Academic Score	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**F**	**Sig**
Happiness score	46-60%	107.944	28.7494	1.159	0.319
	61-75%	115.408	17.4116		
	Above 75%	118.7	16.9709		
	Total	114.091	20.5748		

Fig. 6