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Happiness in relation to perceived parental support and self-esteem among Indian adults

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Abstract

This study was designed to examine the relationship between happiness, perceived parental support and self-esteem among Indian adults. The Oxford Happiness Inventory, Perceived Parental Support Scale and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale were administered on 150 Indian adults within the age range of 20 to 28 years. Obtained data were analyzed by using Descriptive Statistics i.e. t 'tests, mean and standard deviation and Pearson's Correlation Analysis. Results shows that female Indian adults are high on perceived parental support from mother as compare to their male counterparts. Results also shows that male and female Indian adults do not differ on perceived parental support from father, self-esteem and happiness. Obtained correlations shows that perceived parental support from both mother and father are positively and significantly related to happiness among Indian adults.

Keywords: Happiness, perceived parental support, self-esteem and Indian adults

Introduction

Subjective well-being, happiness and life satisfaction are used synonymously in literature. In early 20th century, The scientific discipline of happiness grew rapidly one reason for that people in the western nations have achieved a level of material abundance and health that allows them to go beyond mere survival in seeking the good life people around the globe are entering a "Post materialistic" world in which they are concerned with issues of quality of life beyond economic prosperity. Subjective well-being is also popular because it is particularly democratic it grants respect to what people think and feel about their lives. People are not content to have experts evaluate their lives, they believe that their opinions matter. In addition the study of happiness flourished because of the growing trend toward individualism around the globe. Individualists are concerned with their own feeling and beliefs and thus, the study of subjective well-being corresponds well with the western zeitgeist. Finally, the field increased in popularity because researchers succeeded in developing scientific methods for studying subjective well-being. For these reasons of scientific study of happiness is now poised to grow into a major scholarly and applied discipline.

Happiness and well-being is the central objective of positive psychology (Seligman, 2002) [14]. Happiness may have three distinct components: the frequency and degree of joy, the average level of life satisfaction over a given period, and an absence of negative feelings (Argyle, Martin & Crossland, 1989) [1]. An alternative though note contradictory, model of happiness was developed by Seligman (2002) [14]. In this model components of happiness are positive emotion and pleasure, engagement (with family, friends, romantic partners, career, and hobbies), and meaning (contributing to "the bigger picture"); of these components, pleasure is held to be the least significant in creating a happy life. Recent research lends support to this idea, showing an orientation to pleasure is not as strong a predictor of life satisfaction as engagement or meaning (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005) [11]. Recently, Sasanpour *et al.* (2012) [13] found no significant difference on happiness among students.

Perceived parental support refers to gestures or acts of caring, acceptance, and assistance that are expressed by a parent toward a child. Support from parents received during childhood is thought to have significant and lasting health implications because the parent-child relationship serves as the context within which important health-enhancing social and psychological development takes place.

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For instance, if parents provide children with a caring and supportive environment, then children may generalize this learning experience. As they age, they may seek out environments in which social support is readily available (Caspi & Elder, 1988) [4]. Conversely, if parents are neither helpful nor available, then children may develop lifelong patterns of withdrawal from and avoidance of others (Bowlby, 1980) [3].

Research on both aspect of self, particularly research on self-evaluation and self-regulation; has pinpointed strengths of importance to positive psychology. Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation toward oneself; an overall evaluation of one's worth or value. People are motivated to have high self-esteem and having it indicate positive self-regard, not egotism. Self-esteem is only one component of self-concept, which Rosenberg (1965) [12] defines as "Totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings with reference to himself as an object." Besides self-esteem, self-efficacy or mastery and self-identities are important part of the self-concept. Recently, Narender and Joshi (2010) [8] studied happiness in relation to emotional intelligence, perceived parental support and self-esteem among young adults. They found that male and female adults differ significantly on perceived parental support. They also found no gender difference on self-esteem and happiness. Correlational results also revealed positive and significant association between perceived parental support from both mother and father and happiness.

Objectives

The main objectives of the present study are:-

1. To find gender differences on happiness, perceived parental support and self-esteem.
2. To study the relationship between happiness, perceived parental support and self-esteem.

Hypotheses

1. There is likelihood of gender differences on perceived parental support.
2. Male and female adults are not likely to differ on self-esteem.
3. Male and female adults are likely to differ on happiness.
4. There exists positive relationship between happiness and perceived parental support.
5. Happiness is likely to show positive relation with self-esteem.

Method

Sample

Sample for the present study consists of 150 Indian adults was randomly drawn from different education colleges of Kaithal and Panipat districts using cluster random sampling. All the colleges were affiliated to same university and were having more or less same educational facilities. Further this sample was divided into two groups, Male and Female Group. Male group consists of 75 participant's alongwith Female group with 75 participants. The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 28 years with the mean age of 24 years. The representative sample was from all walks of life.

Tools

The Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI)

The Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle *et al.*, 1989) is a 29-item questionnaire used to measure general happiness level. Items are rated on a 6-point Likert Scale from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree. High scores on the OHI are

indicative of high happiness. The OHI has a Cronbach coefficient alpha of .90 and a test-retest reliability of .78 over 7 weeks and .67 over five months (Argyle *et al.*, 1989). Validity evidence includes correlations of .40 to .60 with three dimensions of happiness: positive affect, life satisfaction and negative affect and distress (Argyle *et al.*, 1989). The inter-item correlations for the OHI ranged from .03 to .58 with mean .28.

Perceived Parental Support Scale (PPSS)

Perceived Parental Support Scale (Shaw *et al.*, 2004) [15] was used to assess the perceived availability of love and emotional support from participant's parents during childhood. It consists of two subscales of 6 identical items; these six items were derived from the 12 "care" items of The Parental Bonding Instrument (Parker *et al.*, 1979) [10]. The first subscale asks the participants to answer the questions with reference to their mother (or the female who was responsible for raising the participant) while the second subscale is answered with reference to the participant's father (or the male who was responsible for raising the participant). The measure provides an overall score derived from the sum of all 12 items. High scores on the PPSS indicate high parental support during childhood. This measure of perceived parental support has demonstrated an internal consistency reliability of .90 for the mother subscale and .92 for the father subscale (Shaw *et al.*, 2004) [15]. The Parental Bonding Instrument (Parker *et al.*, 1979) [10] from which the PPSS is derived, has good evidence of concurrent, construct and predictive validity

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) [12] is a 10-item scale, designed to measure global feelings of self-acceptance and self-worth. The 10 items are rated on a 4-point Likert Scale from (0) strongly agree to (3) strongly disagree. High scores indicate high self-esteem. This measure has a demonstrated test-retest reliability of .85 and an internal consistency reliability of .88 (Rosenberg, 1965) [12]. It has strong evidence of concurrent, construct, and predictive validity (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991) [2].

Results and Discussion

Table-1 presents the mean, SD of both groups and t- value of the observed variables. Perceived Parent Support from Mother (PPSM) is a measure of maternal support provided to the individual during childhood. On this variable, mean and SD of male group are 21.17 and 3.23 respectively whereas these are 22.50 and 2.03 for female group. The t-value for PPSM variable is 3.02 which is significant at .01 level. The results show that females received more mother support in childhood as compared to their male counterparts.

On Perceived Parents Support from Father (PPSF), the mean and SD of the male group are 20.74 and 3.60 respectively whereas these are 21.17 and 2.42 for the female group. The t-value for PPSF variable is .85 which is not significant. The result shows that male and female do not differ in getting support from father during childhood.

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and t-value for both Female and Male Groups

Variable	Male N= 75		Female N= 75		t-value	Significance Level (p)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Perceived Parental Support From Mother	21.17	3.23	22.50	2.03	3.02	.01
Perceived Parental Support From Father	20.74	3.60	21.17	2.42	.85	NS
Self-Esteem	14.62	2.48	14.76	2.57	.32	NS
Happiness	130.86	19.97	131.40	16.98	.17	.NS

NS- Non -Significant

The mean of male participants on Self-Esteem (SE) variable is 14.62 whereas it is 14.76 for female participants; SD of male participants is 2.48 as compared to 2.57 of female on this variable. The t-value for SE variable is .32 which is not significant. The results show that male and female participants do not differ on self-esteem. On variable Happiness (HAPP), the mean and SD of the male group are 130.86 and 19.97 respectively whereas these are 131.40 and 16.98 for the female group. The t-value for this variable is .17 which is not significant. The result shows that male and female do not differ on happiness.

Table -2 shows the correlations among the subtests of perceived parental support is high and positive. The inter-correlation between these measures (PPSM and PPSF) equals to .50 which is significant at .01 level of probability. Indian adults enjoy support during childhood from their father and mother. The correlations between Happiness and PPSM, and PPSF are .25 and .28 respectively. It means that parental support from both mother and father in childhood is related to happiness. The correlations between Self-Esteem and PPSM, between Self-Esteem and PPSF, between Self-Esteem and Happiness are non-significant.

Table 2: Inter correlation Matrix

	PPSM	PPSF	SE	HAPP
PPSM	-	.50**	.01	.25**
PPSF		-	.05	.28**
SE			-	-.02
HAPP				-

**= p =.01 level of probability

Discussion

In general, most of the findings of the present study are in support of the hypotheses and most of the earlier findings. These findings are discussed in the light of earlier research. The hypothesis 1 regarding gender differences on perceived parental support is accepted as gender differences on perceived parental support from mother are found. It is found that females perceived more parental support from mother as compare to their male counterparts. This finding is also very relevant in Indian context as mother take the dominant role in bringing up the children. These results are consistent with the findings of Narender and Joshi (2010) [8]. The hypothesis 2 regarding no gender differences on self-esteem is accepted. This finding is consistent with earlier findings (Narender & Joshi, 2010) [8]. Present data also found no difference on happiness. Hence hypothesis 3 is rejected. This finding is consistent with Sasanpour *et al.* (2012) [13] and Narender and Joshi (2010) [8] who found no significant difference between men and women group on happiness.

The hypothesis 4 regarding the association between perceived parental support and happiness is accepted. It simply means that parental support is highly related to happiness among Indian adults similar findings have also been observed in other studies (Cripps & Zyromsky, 2009; Narender & Joshi, 2010; Sillick & Schutte, 2006) [5, 8, 16]. In a culture like India

these findings are obvious as more parental support has leads to happiness. Recent reviews (Lyuborniosky *et al.* 2006; Neff *et al.* 2007; Gorjain, 2009) [7, 9, 6] indicate that there is positive association between self-esteem and happiness results of the present study is inconsistent to earlier studies. In the present study no significant relationship is found between happiness and self-esteem. This finding is consistent with Narender and Joshi (2010) [8]. The hypothesis 5 regarding the positive association between self-esteem and happiness is rejected. These results may be interpreted with caution in the light of the earlier study. More studies are required to establish the relationship between happiness and self-esteem on Indian sample.

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