



A STUDY OF HAPPINESS AMONG SCHOOL STUDENTS OF PUNJAB

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Abstract: The present study aims to study the overall happiness among school students of Punjab and also gender wise happiness of school students of Punjab. The sample of the study was 1075 students of six districts of Punjab. Descriptive method of study was used for the study. Happiness scale prepared by investigator herself was used as a research tool to collect data. It has been found that school students of Punjab possess above average level of happiness. It has also been revealed that there was found no significant difference in the mean scores of happiness in relation to gender of school students.

INTRODUCTION: In English language, “happy” as an adjective has three broad meanings (1) fortunate, lucky, feeling or expressing pleasure, contentment, satisfaction, etc. (2) pleased (3) well suited to the situation. “Happiness” is used as a noun to convey the first meaning (Horn by et al. 1948). It is not difficult to understand then why in the western psychological studies happiness is often implied as a psychological state following the gratification of some important human needs or desires. (Diener, 1984; Veenhoven, 1984).

According to Lyubomirsky, happiness is defined as “the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one’s life is good, meaningful and worthwhile.” The experience of happiness is primarily a subjective phenomenon (Lucas & Diener 2009; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade 2005; Veenhoven 2010). It is a conscious state of mind and can therefore be measured by simply asking people how happy they are (Veenhoven 2003; Veenhoven 2008; Veenhoven 2010). For most individuals, being happy is a leading goal in life (Baumeister et al. 2003; Diener 2000; Fordyce 1988; Lucas & Diener 2009; Seligman 2008).

Happiness is a state of well-being and satisfaction or contentment. It is the state of being happy or feeling excited for future. It is a pleasurable or satisfying experience of mind. It is the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his/her own life as a whole favorably, and it is generally considered to be an ultimate goal in life. Aristotle concluded that, more than anything else, men and women seek happiness. Every other goal—health, beauty, money or power—is valued only with the expectation that these will make us happy. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The term happiness seems very vague and unmanageable. Seligman (2012) proposed that the term could be decomposed in to five scientifically manageable realms. These are positive emotion (pleasant life), engagement (engaged life), meaning (meaningful life), positive relationship and accomplishment. These terms are measurable, manageable, and can be handled precisely. Most importantly the components are skill based and can be taught and learnt.

Happiness, a positive emotional state, is highly valued in present day competitive and struggling society (Bentham 1789). It comprises both an affective component (i.e., the experience of relatively frequent positive and relatively infrequent negative emotions) and a cognitive component (i.e., relatively high life satisfaction or a positive overall evaluation of one’s life) (Diener et al., 1999). Various researchers (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999) use the term subjective well-being as a synonym for happiness that involves the subjective evaluation of one’s current status in the world. It is a combination of positive affect (in the absence of negative affect) and general life satisfaction i.e., subjective appreciation of life rewards (Diener, 2000).

Myers and Diener (1995) described happiness as, “the experience of joy, contentment or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one’s life is good, meaningful and worthwhile. Happiness is a subjective phenomenon for which the final judge should be ‘whoever lives inside a person’s skin’”.

In opinion of Lu and Shih (1997), “The most general description of happiness would be an internal experience of a positive state of mind which can be induced through various means”.

Veenhoven (1997) viewed happiness as “the degree to which a person evaluates the overall quality of his present life-as-a-whole positively. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads”?

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) opined happiness as: “One’s enduring level of happiness results from three factors:

- One's set range - the basic biologically determined range within which one's happiness normally will be;
- The circumstances of one's life: the conditions such as being married and living in a democratic country somehow seem to contribute to happiness.
- One's voluntary control: the things you can do to get your happiness to the upper part of your set range".

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) further explained that happiness may refer to three domains also viz.

a) The past (satisfaction, contentment, fulfillment, pride and serenity); b) The present (joy, ecstasy, calm, zest, ebullience, pleasure and flow); c) The future (optimism, hope, faith, trust).

In view of Alan Carr (2004), happiness is defined as "a positive psychological state characterized by a high level of satisfaction with life, a high level of positive affect and a low level of negative affect".

Overall happiness is defined by Veenhoven (1984) as "the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life-as-a-whole favorably". Thus, happiness appears as an attitude towards one's own life, that has some stability of its own and that involve related feelings and beliefs. These feelings and beliefs are seen as 'components' of happiness.

Happiness of the human species has always been at the focus and forefront of attention of the researchers. Its manifestations were prime topics for literary and poetic descriptions. It gained their attraction partly from their recipes for reaching this goal. Political ideologies centered on the ideal society that would guarantee ultimate happiness. Economists developed quantitative measures to describe a whole nation's well-being while social scientists, noting the shortcomings of economic indices, concerned themselves with various social indicators to describe the quality of life. The psychological importance of happiness has been recognized for most aspects of social and private life. As a consequence, the topic has attracted interest from several fields of psychology. One of the major aims of a democratic government is to promote the good life and a flourishing society, where citizens are happy, healthy, capable and engaged – in other words with high levels of well-being. While many policies tend to focus on enhancing people's incomes by expanding the economy, this has not tended to result in higher levels of well-being. In fact, while GDP has nearly doubled over the last 30 years, measures of well-being have remained static.

Some studies have also attempted to determine whether happy and unhappy people differ in their activity patterns. For example, Robinson and Martin (2008) found that happy people report being more active in most social activities, religion and newspaper reading after controlling for education, marital status and other predictors of happiness. Argyle (2001) compiled a list of different kind of activities that most studies found the source of positive emotions such as joy. Among these were activities like eating, social activities like cooperation, smile and sex, exercise and sport, alcohol and drugs, success and social approval, use of skills, music, other arts and religion, weather and environment, rest and relaxation, etc.

Most of people search happiness into materialistic objects which is actually related to their mind. True happiness starts within their conscious which relates to self-esteem, confidence, and positive energy. James asserts that the pursuit of happiness is an important determinant of human behavior. How to gain, how to keep and how to recover happiness is in fact, for most people, at all times the secret motive for all they do. During last decades, health as a human right and social aim is recognized in the world. Mental health criteria include satisfaction sense and tranquility which reflect individual's well-being. Denier et al. (2002) believe that well-being equals personal happiness. Happiness is given so much importance because people, who are happy, perceive the world as safer, make decisions more easily, are cooperative and live energized and satisfied lives. Subjective well-being, especially measured in terms of "happiness" and "life satisfaction", is increasingly considered an important policy goal around the globe.

OVERVIEW OF REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- There are found a number of factors:- socio economic status, external and internal locus(Tammy et al.) thinking styles, parental support (Kumar 2016),living conditions(Sharma and Gulati2014), academic stressors (Snider 2005), social and occupational stress (Crossley and langridge2005),emotional competency, environment (Ckiszentmihalyi and Hunter2003), physical health (Perneger et al 2004), socio demographic factors (GudmondSdottir 2012), intrinsic motivation (Amir and Ghamari 2013), confidential relationship (Uusitalo-Malmivaara et al.2013), school work life (Abdurrahman et al.2015),Resilience(Benada and Chowdhry 2017), thinking styles (Tingaz et al.2018) which contribute significantly to happiness.
- Some studies showed significant gender difference in happiness. (Khalek 2006),(Crossley and langridge2005), (Tkach and lyubomirsky2006)
- Some studies showed no significant gender difference in happiness (Malmivaara et al.2013), (Jui 2011), (GudmondSdottir2012), (Natvig et al.2003).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study level of happiness among school students.
2. To study level of happiness among school students in relation to gender.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

On the basis of review of related studies, following hypotheses were constructed:

There were no significant gender wise difference in level of happiness among school students of Punjab.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS USED

Happiness refers to a person's positive emotions, engagement in activities, positive relationships, meaningful life and accomplishment or achievements in life. For the present study, it was measured in terms of the scores obtained by school students on Happiness Scale based on Seligman's PERMA model of happiness prepared by investigator herself.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is delimited to senior secondary school students of +1 class studying in schools affiliated to Punjab School Education Board, Mohali.
2. The sample is restricted to six districts of Punjab i.e. Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Patiala, Sangrur, Barnala and Mansa.

RESEARCH TOOL USED

Happiness scale prepared by investigator herself was used as a research tool to collect data.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY AND SAMPLING

The population of the present study was senior secondary school students of +1 class studying in schools affiliated to Punjab School Education Board, Mohali. of Barnala District. The sample is restricted to six districts of Punjab i.e. Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Patiala, Sangrur, Barnala and Mansa.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

The purpose of the study is to examine level of happiness among school students. For this purpose, descriptive statistics namely mean and standard deviation is used to study the level of happiness among school students. The use of t-test is made to study the gender wise differences in happiness among school students.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF HAPPINESS SCORES AMONG SCHOOL STUDENTS

The frequency distribution of happiness scores among school students with descriptive statistics are given in the table 4.1.

Table4.1

Frequency Distribution of Scores of Happiness among School Students(N=1074)

Class Interval	Frequency	Percentage	CPF%
181-190	66	6.14	100.00
171-180	258	24.02	93.86
161-170	189	17.59	69.84
151-160	200	18.63	52.25
141-150	179	16.68	33.62
131-140	95	8.86	16.94
121-130	28	2.62	8.08

111-120	34	3.16	5.46
101-110	16	1.48	2.30
91-100	3	0.27	0.82
81-90	2	0.18	0.55
71-80	0	0	0.37
61-70	0	0	0.37
51-60	4	0.37	0.37
Total	1014	100	
N	Mean	Median	Mode
1074	156.91	159	163.18
			SD
			19.47
			Skewness
			-0.32
			Kurtosis
			0.278

Taking the group as a whole it can be seen in table 4.1 that the mean score on happiness of school students is 156.91 with an SD of 19.47. It further shows that 47.75% school students were on above average level of happiness, 18.63% school students were found to possess an average level of happiness; and 33.62% school students were on below average level of happiness. It may be concluded that the sample of school students under study possesses an above average level of happiness.

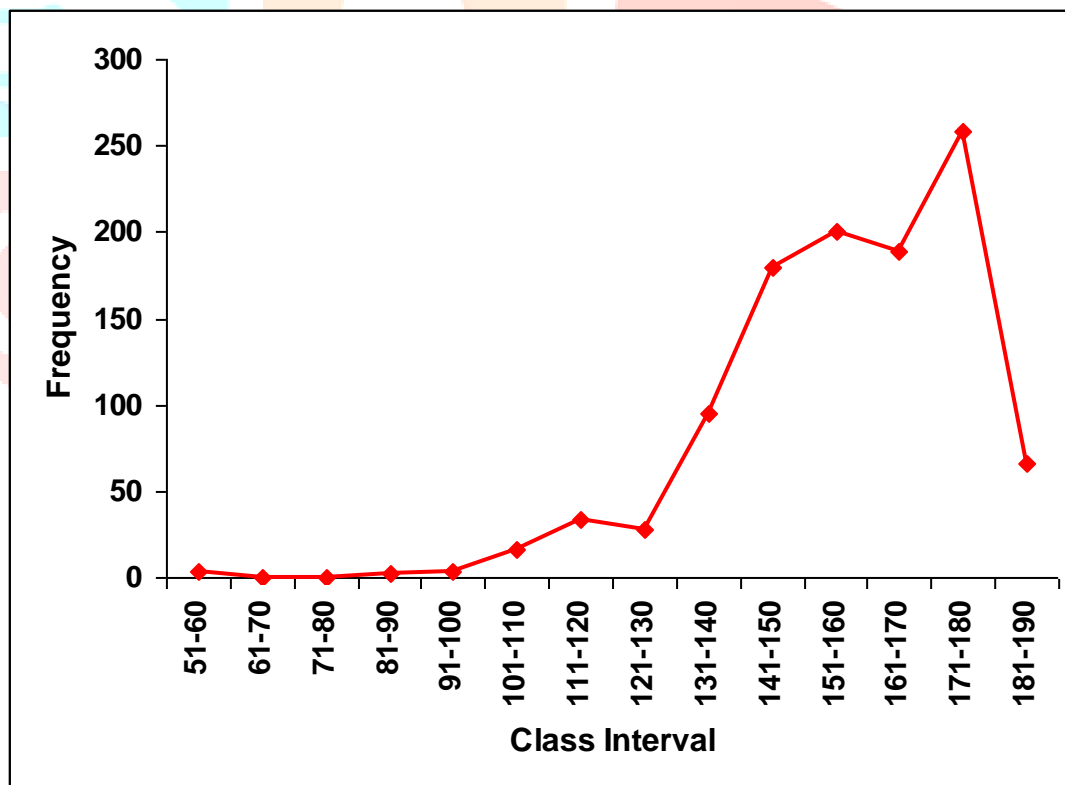


Figure 4.1: Frequency Distribution of Scores of Happiness among School Students

The frequency distribution curve of scores of happiness (Figure 4.1) shows that the distribution is negatively skewed (Skewness= -0.32) or skewed left, meaning the left tail is longer. The value of kurtosis is 0.27 which is slightly more than 0.263. So, it can be said that curve is platykurtic, flatter than normal curve. However, the distortion in both the cases (skewness and kurtosis) from the normal value (0.00 for skewness and 0.263 for kurtosis) were negligible. Hence the distribution can be treated as normal distribution.

COMPARISON OF SCORES OF HAPPINESS AMONG SCHOOL STUDENTS INRELATION TO GENDER

Table 4.11 shows the scores of happiness of boys and girls school students along with their SD as well as t-value indicating the significance of difference between their means.

Table 4.11

Comparison of Scores of Happiness of School Students in Relation to their Gender					
Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value
Boys	519	156.28	19.67	1.18	1.03 ^{NS}
Girls	555	157.50	19.29		

NS= Not Significant

Table 4.11 reveals that mean score of happiness of boys is 156.28 whereas the mean score of happiness of girls is 157.50. Standard deviation is calculated 19.67 and 19.29 respectively. The t-value signifying the difference between happiness level of boys and girls is 1.03 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that level of happiness does not differ significantly in relation to their gender. So, it can be said that boys and girls have same level of happiness. It is also depicted in figure 4.11.

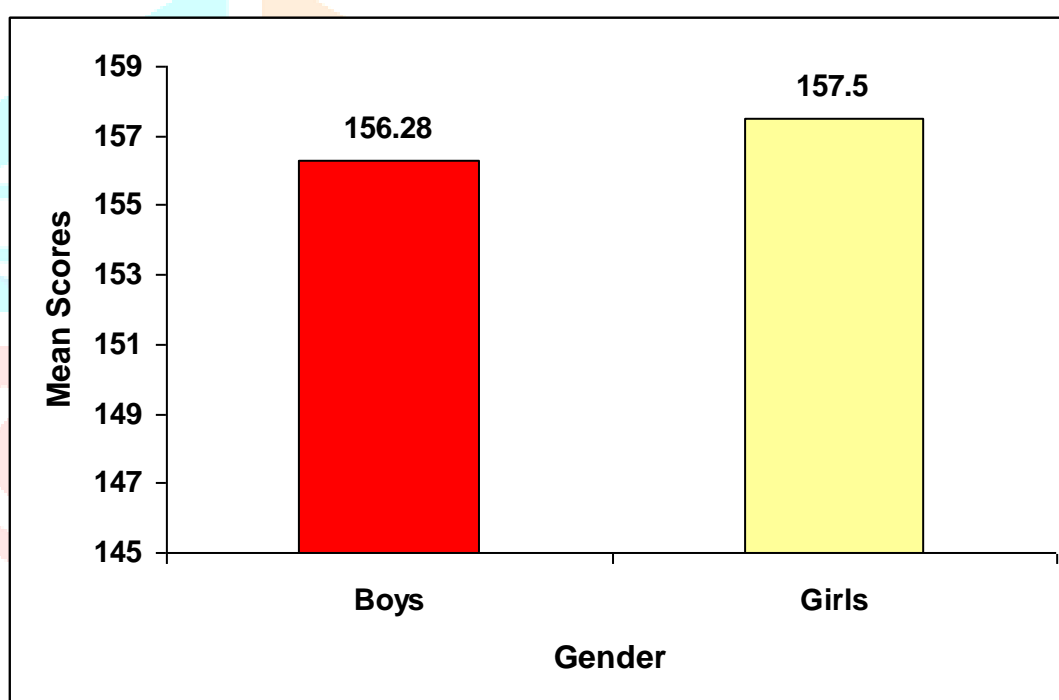


Figure 4.11: Comparison of Scores of Happiness of School Students in Relation to their Gender

Figure 4.11 illustrates that mean value of scores of happiness of boys is 156.28 and girls is 157.50.

The results of the present study are in line with the studies undertaken by Moorjani et al.(2004), Crossley & Langdrige (2005), Jui (2011), Arthur (2012), Amir &Ghamari (2013), Malik (2013), Malmivaara et al. (2013), Kaur et al. (2014), Lesani et al. (2016), Mehrdadi et al. (2016), Batik et al.(2017),Mohakud (2017), Rohit (2018), Tingaz (2018), Vilkuh& Behera (2019),Prajapati & Patel (2020) and Cui & Yang(2022).

In contrary to this result, studies conducted by Crossley & Langdrige (2005), Khalek (2006), Selim (2008), Sharma & Gulati, (2014), Mishra (2017), Dar &Wani (2017), Kaur & Kaur (2018), Vyas & Prajapati (2020) and Sharma & Parveen (2021) found significant gender differences in happiness.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of statistical analysis of data, the following conclusions are drawn:-

1. The level of happiness of among school students is of above average level, the mean performance being 156 on a scale of 37-185.
2. There was found no significant difference in the mean scores of happiness in relation to gender of school students. It shows that both boys and girls are almost at same level of happiness.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of the present investigation reveal that the happiness of school students is independent of their gender. In Indian society, it is generally perceived that boys are more happy than girls as boys get more freedom than girls, but the study shows that girls are equally happy and enjoy life. Hence, different experiences should not be planned for the girls and boys on the basis of their gender rather their school and home experiences should be decided on the basis of their individual choices and hobbies.

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