

## The Relationship between Happiness and Academic Achievements

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### Abstract

The present study is aimed to investigate the relationship between happiness and academic achievement among students. From the statistic population of 18465 people, 320 were chosen by stratified random sampling method using Morgan table. The research method is of correlation kind and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was used for data collection. The results showed that students' happiness is not satisfactory. In addition, the mean scores of academic achievement of girls are more than the boys and the mean happiness score among female students is more than male ones. But, the total score is less than the mean happiness score of both male and female students. Finally, there is a significant positive relationship between happiness and achievement of students. There is also a significant positive correlation between happiness and the progress of students (by discipline).

**Keywords:** happiness, achievement, student, Shiraz

### Introduction

Academic achievement is one of the most important indicators to assess progress in education and it is the only goal for the entire educational system to achieve. In other words, the society is interested and worried about the fate of the individual, his successful development and status in the community, and expects him to exceed in various aspects, including cognitive skills and abilities, and grow different dimensions of personality, emotional and behavioral development and excellence (Farahani, 1994)

Academic achievement is of the topics which has been paid attention to from educational and psychological point of view. Research findings have shown academic achievement is affected not only by the structures of knowledge and information processing but it is also related to the motivational factors such as beliefs, attitudes and values (Bassant, 1995).

Happiness is one of the variables that are related to academic achievement. According to research, the people who have a high sense of happiness are more active in academic performance and progress of higher education (Fritz, 1984).

University students form a large portion of the active population of a country. In all countries, issues and problems of university students have taken on a wide range and it seems that several factors endanger their psychological health. This combination of factors may be internal stimuli like personality, which leads him to the defeat and surrender to the underlying problems or environmental factors such as stress. Extreme stress among students cause educational failure, unemployment, addiction and drug abuse, health problems, poor performance, dropout, and in some cases even lead to suicide and murder. Faced with various stressors and reactions from them, students usually try to use coping mechanisms such as avoiding stress, seeking social support or turning on a specific religion and religious rituals or negative coping mechanisms such as alcohol and drug use.

Happiness is a broad concept and has both cognitive and emotional components. Emotional component means balance between pleasant and unpleasant emotions. The cognitive component is

life satisfaction and evaluating the meaning of life according to his standards (Diener 2000, as cited in Hadi Nejad, 2009).

Arjil and his colleagues suggest that, happiness components include positive emotions, life satisfaction and the absence of negative emotions. They found that relationships with others, knowing the purpose of life, personal growth, considering others and nature are of the components of happiness (Kalantari, 2003).

Happiness is made of a number of factors such as general life satisfaction, positive emotions, etc. These components can be divided into smaller parts. Positive emotions can be classified into concepts such as pleasure, satisfaction, pride, love, joy and passion. Negative emotions can be applied to concepts such as guilt, shame, sadness, anger, anxiety, depression, jealousy, etc.

#### **Factors affecting happiness**

These factors can be classified as follows:

*Personality:* Personality dimensions have impact on the peoples' happiness. Psychological studies about the influence of personality on the amount of happiness, have confirmed the positive relationship between extraversion and happiness.

*Self-esteem:* Self-esteem is one of the factors that can have a significant impact on happiness. When there is discomfort and lack of self-esteem, happiness decreases.

*Religious beliefs:* One of the factors contributing to happiness is faith. It makes people feel less abandoned, and lonely.

*Social Capital:* Social capital affects happiness more than human capital.

*Leisure time activities:* It can be a very good source to create happiness.

*Economic situation:* Some think money is the main factor of happiness, while scholars have rejected this approach.

*Health:* Happiness boosts the immune system and strong immune system, improves health (Bahmani, 2000).

#### **Happiness from the psychological point of view**

From a psychological perspective, happiness is looked at the individual level. Happiness is believed to be one of the personal features of a man. It means that the happiness of every individual depends on individual characteristics and how he looks at life. Human ideas about happiness are rooted in human nature. For example, a patient and contented person, understands happiness better than impatient and greedy humans. It should be noted that this theory at the individual level, achieved results based on the analysis of longitudinal and experimental study:

- Happiness is firmly fixed in the short term and long term.
- Happiness depends on luck or usefulness.
- Happiness does not depend only on internal factors and external and environmental factors also play a role (Mohammadi, as cited in Gustad, 2011)

One of the factors that cause a person to feel happy is his perceptions of himself. When a person finds his inner core and is aware of his power, he can overcome the problems and develop the circumstances of life by relying on his abilities. Because when people are faced with the problem, cannot be indifferent to cross it and try to get rid of problems with respect to existing facilities (Abedi, 2004).

#### **Happiness in Ellis' opinion**

According to Ellis, the starting point when trying to make ourselves happy is to know that sadness is the last step in a three-step chain.

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Step (A): A trigger event that can be a rejection by the others.

Step (B): The combination of rational and irrational reactions to the event.

Step (C): Is serious depression or sadness. The main treatment that Ellis' intellectual and emotional method has raised is to change self -destructive thoughts that often occur following unpleasant experiences in life. (Saman, 2004)

### **Arjil and colleagues' theory about happiness**

In Arjil and his colleagues' idea, happiness is formed of two pillars including emotional and cognitive. They believe that if people are asked "what is the purpose of Happiness", there would be two types of responses:

A) They may state positive emotional conditions such as pleasures.

B) They may call it satisfaction in general, or satisfaction with most aspects of their lives.

In Arjil and his colleagues' idea, happiness is not the opposite of depression, but they believe for the person to be happy, he must not be depressed. As the emotion is not the opposite of negative emotion (Bahmani, 2010).

### **Happiness in Ericsson's idea**

In Carl Ericsson's idea, the ultimate goal of life is happiness and true happiness is important in light of the meaning of life. In theories, known as the ultimate goal, it is believed that happiness is achieved when people with clear objectives realize their values meet their needs. In this sense, the happiness depends on the values and aspirations of the people and it cannot be assumed to be absolute and comprehensive. People, who consider their goals more important and more likely to reach, will feel happier. While people with low happiness, feel more conflicts in their aims. (Pour zarei, 2003)

Research findings of Saaf Ara and Dejkam (2003) with the title of happiness norm finding at Tehran University students tested on 608 people suggests that the amount of happiness in female students is more than male students. And, there is much more happiness in the married students than single students. Also, there is a direct and positive relationship between happiness and age (Bagheri, 2006)

Research findings on the relationship between happiness and achievement at Tehran University, using the Oxford questionnaire, showed there is a positive relationship between happiness and achievement (Heidari, 2009).

### **Research Objectives**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between happiness and academic achievement of the students of Islamic Azad University of Shiraz.

### **Research Methodology**

Descriptive research method is a survey method. **For this purpose**, a sample of 320 subjects were selected through stratified-random sampling as it is evident from table 1.

**Table 1: Number of sample in terms of gender**

Students' Sex	Total frequency	Percentage %	Sampling frequency
<b>Boys</b>	8230	45	144
<b>Girls</b>	10235	55	176
<b>Total</b>	18465	100	320

**Table 2: Number of sample in terms of discipline**

Faculty	Total number of Students	Percentage %	Sampling frequency
Economics and Management	3474	18	58
Engineering & Technology	6450	35	112
Humanities	3545	19	61
Fundamental Sciences	1446	8	26
Art and Architecture	3550	20	157
Total	18465	100	320

***Instruments of the study***

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) was used for data collection. It includes 29 items. The theoretical basis of the questionnaire is Arjil's definition of happiness. The questionnaire consists of seven subscales including self-fancy, life satisfaction, psychological fitness, being on a good mood, aesthetic feeling, self-efficacy, and hope

**Results**

To see whether there is any significant relationship between happiness and achievement among the students of Islamic Azad University in Shiraz, based on gender, and field of study. To answer the question, the frequency table and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used.

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics for happiness and academic achievement**

Students	Mean scores of academic achievement	SD	Mean score of Happiness	SD
Male	15.86	8.36	60.36	5.22
Female	15.93	7.23	55.07	4.86

According to the table above, the mean academic achievement of girls is higher than the boys. The mean happiness score in female students is more than that of male students. But, the happiness mean of the students is less than the mean.

**Table 4: Pearson's correlation between happiness and academic achievement**

Students	correlation coefficient	Sig.
Male	0.59	0.5
Female	0.54	0.5
Total	0.57	0.5

As it is evident from table 4, there is a significant positive correlation between happiness and achievement of students (boys and girls). This means that an increase or decrease in happiness increases or decreases the level of academic achievement.

**Table 5: The correlation coefficient between happiness and academic achievement of students based on the field of study**

Faculty	correlation coefficient	Sig.
Economics and Management	0.58	0.01
Engineering and Technology	0.50	0.03
Humanities	0.46	0.05
Fundamental Sciences	0.63	0.01
Art and Architecture	0.63	0.01
Total	0.56	0.05

According to the table above, in general, there is a significant positive correlation between happiness and academic achievement by discipline. ( $r=0/56$  &  $p<0/05$ )

Also, there is a significant relationship between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students of economics and management ( $r=0/58$  &  $p<0/01$ ), students of Humanities ( $r=0/46$  &  $p<0/05$ ), engineering students ( $r=0/050$  &  $p<0/03$ ), fundamental Sciences students ( $r=0.63$  &  $p<0/01$ ), and Art and Architecture students ( $r=0/63$  &  $p<0/01$ ).

### **Conclusion**

The results showed the mean academic achievement of girls is higher than that of the boys. The mean happiness score in female students is more than that of male students. But, the happiness of the students is less than the mean. There is also a significant positive relationship between happiness and achievement of students ( boys and girls).

On the other hand, significant relationship was observed between happiness and academic achievement among the students of economics and management sciences and humanities, engineering students, fundamental sciences students and the students of art and architecture.

These results agree with the findings of Safa'ra and Dejkam (2004) which showed happiness rate of females is more than that of males, and happiness in the married students is much more than single students. Also, there is a direct and positive relationship between happiness and age.

The research was also in line with the findings of Rafa't which showed that there is a positive relationship between happiness and educational attainments.

The results of the research are aligned with Fransys and colleagues' (2002) findings which showed that there were no significant differences between boys and girls happiness.

Since multiple factors contribute to happiness including character, self-esteem, social capital, health and economic status, each of these factors should be examined to see what effects they have had on the students' happiness. According to Erikson's theory, happiness depends on the values and aspirations of the people, and it cannot be assumed to be absolute and comprehensive.

People, who consider their goals more important and more likely to reach, will feel happier. While people with less happiness, feel more conflicts in their aims. However, the happiness of every individual depends on individual characteristics that how he looks at life and Human ideas about happiness are rooted in human nature. For example, a patient and contented person, understands happiness better than impatient and greedy humans. One of the factors that cause a person to feel happy is his perceptions of himself. When a person finds his inner core and is aware of his power, he can overcome the problems and develop the circumstances of life by relying on his abilities. Because when people are faced with the problem, they cannot be indifferent to cross it and try to get rid of problems with respect to existing facilities (Abedi, 2004)

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