

HAPPINESS AND RESILIENCE AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract:

The psychological skills needed by students cannot be ignored as we demand more of them in University studies. Learning an employability skill is important, but it is also important to be able to handle the pressure of academics, assignments, deadlines, examinations, and all the other stressors that are now closely related to a student's life. Students are much more likely to be happy and remain happy for a longer period of time if they can deal with stressors and recover swiftly from stressors. The ability and capacity to recover quickly from a setback and handle stress is known as Resilience.

Studies have shown that positive emotions increase resilience, which in turn increases feelings of happiness and fulfillment. Happiness has now become a part of the global policy agenda. In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly recognized happiness as a fundamental human goal in a Resolution entitled 'Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development'. According to the 2015 World Happiness Report, schools that prioritize learner wellbeing have the potential to be more effective, with better learning outcomes and greater achievements in learners' lives.

With this background, the purpose of this study was to ascertain correlation between resilience and happiness among college students. The data suggests that there is a significant positive correlation between the resilience and happiness levels of college students which is a positive indicator. If happiness is boosted, it has implications on resilience too.

The researchers suggest a path that can be followed for positive transformation. The Happiness Curriculum has been already introduced and is slowly but steadily finding its roots in school curriculum. However, the need of the hour is to continue it through the college curriculum as well. The happiness curriculum looks to create a stimulating environment for learners in schools and if taken up to higher education, will help students to reflect better, gain insight into their thoughts and feelings, and bring about change in behavior accordingly.

Key Words: *Happiness, Resilience, College students, Happiness Curriculum*

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Introduction:

The pursuit of happiness in life is the goal of every individual. This applies to students as well. Students need to be happy, resilient and mindful because their psychological health can impact their academic performance as well as their educational and professional goals and objectives. Positive emotions are a marker of happiness and

lead to joy and contentment. They also aid in recovering from negativity and emotions that lead to distress. Interventions to increase happiness inform the efforts to increase resilience. Hence it is primary that both happiness and resilience be studied in conjunction in order to suggest holistic and wholesome growth of today's generation of students.

Students in higher education are being faced with an unmatched demand for a skilled workforce. This pressure on them makes them unsure about the abilities to effectively handle the crisis that comes with the stage of development they are now in. However, they urgently need to be happy and resilient in order to handle the challenges and the complexity of the current global environment. It is hence vital to assess their happiness and resilience.

In a study conducted by Short, et al. (2020), Happiness emerges as a predictor of resilience in students at a further education college.

Cohn et al (2009) studied the effect of Happiness and positive emotions on increasing life satisfaction by building resilience. The study indicated that positive emotions predicted increases in both resilience and life satisfaction. Negative emotions had weak or null effects and did not interfere with the benefits of positive emotions. This suggests that happy people become more satisfied not simply because they feel better but also because they become resilient and develop resources for living well.

Resilience and coping strategies used by people help to deal with stress, anxiety, negative behavior and diseases and also enhances happiness and life satisfaction level significantly (Piqueras et al., 2011). When people are able to adapt well to life's responsibilities, obstacles and setbacks, they are resilient (Wei, Liao, Ku, & Shaffer, 2011). Being happy helps students to accomplish their goals and flourish in life. (Benada & Chowdhry, 2017)

It has been researched that happiness, which is a combination of life satisfaction, coping mechanisms and happy emotions, informs and predicts desirable outcomes for life. The Broaden-and-Build theory emphasizes on the fact that happy feelings encourage people to develop enduring resources.

Lower (2014) established a positive correlation between happiness and resilience. The study found happiness and spirituality to be the best predictors of resilience.

Sample and Tools of the Research:

The current research study has targeted the graduate and post-graduate educational institutions. It is an attempt to assess and ascertain the happiness and resilience levels among university students. This research will be a practical contribution for educational institutions and universities in order to alter their curriculum to include such topics in foundation and specialization courses.

Data for this study was collected from 80 students from across various streams in different Universities. Respondents were male and female, from 18 years to 27 years of age, pursuing graduation and post graduation degrees.

Two tools were used to collect data. The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University. The tool has 29 items and the respondents marked their preferences on a 6-point Likert Scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The Resilience Scale developed by Jardim, Pereira and Bártolo has 10 items and has been standardized on higher

education students.

Demographic Description of Data:

Table 1.1

Attributes		Percentage
Gender	Male	20%
	Female	80%
Education	Graduation	76%
	Post Graduation	24%
Age	Below 20 yrs	64%
	20 yrs - 25 yrs	15%
	Above 25 yrs	21%

The table above shows the demographic description of data. It shows that 20% of the respondents were male and 80% were female. 76% of the respondents were graduates and 24% were post graduates. 64% of the respondents were below 20 years of age, 15% were between 20 and 25 years of age and 21% were above 25 years of age.

Regression Analysis of Resilience and Happiness

Table 1.2

Resilience
Multiple R² = 0.249 (p<0.0001)
Multiple R = 0.499
Total Variance Explained = 20.64%

The table above shows that R Square= 0.249 indicating 24.9 percent variance in the happiness of students is explained by resilience. Since beta=.499, p=.000 we can say resilience plays a strong role in student happiness. The results clearly indicate that the happiness of students is explained by resilience. It was seen that resilience plays a strong role in student happiness.

Discussion:

Happiness does not mean a life free from negative emotions. In reality, the majority of happy people face the same challenges as those who profess to be sad. However, cheerful people are aware that their happiness fuels their will to advance and endure adversity. This can be attributed to the quality of resilience.

Tertiary education students have a lot more to deal with in life other than just academics. If they inherently showcase the quality of resilience, it can lead them to become happier as individuals, paving a way for a successful and fuller life.

Positive psychology is a new field that focuses on happiness, according to the documentary Happy (Shimizu & Belic, 2011), because happiness can help people achieve their objectives and thrive. According to Sonja Lyubomirsky (2001), a prominent psychologist who specializes in studying pleasure, happiness is essential to positive psychology. Despite the numerous issues that people face throughout their lifetimes, the vast majority of people claim to be content and doing well in general. (Diener, 2009).

According to another study, for happiness to prevail, there must be more good and positive encounters than bad and negative ones. (Cohen & Fredrickson, 2009). One can help moderate bad experiences by encouraging and amplifying positive experiences. (Sparks & Baumeister, 2008).

Boosting Happiness and Resilience:

The relationship between happiness and resilience is a complex and multidimensional one. While they are distinct concepts, they are intertwined and can influence each other in various ways. Resilience is fueled by good feelings and positivity. The support that individuals require when attempting to find significance in both commonplace and traumatic events is positivity.

Students must try to discover humor in hardships and difficulties, acknowledge that there are no accidents, and develop the ability to deal with whatever life throws at them. Happiness and resilience take a person ahead of others and bring positivity in life.

The Happiness Curriculum:

This has been introduced by the State Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi in school education as an effort that will open new doors of reform in the field of education at a global level. It is supported by the Dalai Lama.

The Happiness Curriculum is set to ensure that school children become honest and responsible human beings. The Happiness Curriculum is an endeavor to guide the attention of students towards exploring, experiencing and expressing happiness in not just the momentary but deeper and sustainable forms as well. (SCERT, 2019)

The intended outcome is to enhance students' level of awareness, mindfulness and deeper learning to lead a happier and meaningful life. The happiness curriculum in schools demands social, emotional and ethical education as necessary for its success. This is done through mindful activities, stories and activities with reflective questions, and self-expression.

The Happiness Curriculum has already been implemented in schools in a state in India, and its effectiveness might lead to its implementation in other states as well. The students from schools will surely benefit with the happiness curriculum as the researchers of this study suggest, it can definitely be continued further at the college level.

Happiness as an outcome of resilience. It also can serve as a resource that enhances resilience. People who are more resilient are better able to maintain their happiness or recover from setbacks more quickly. They possess a greater ability to find meaning, learn from adversity, and adapt their goals and expectations. Happy and resilient individuals are more likely to experience higher levels of subjective well-being, even in the face of adversity.

Conclusion:

The relationship between happiness and resilience is not one-directional or deterministic. Various factors, such as genetic predispositions, personal characteristics, social support, emotional strength, ethical and environmental factors, can influence both happiness and resilience independently.

The need of the hour is to continue social, emotional and ethical learning components to boost happiness and resilience at school level and continue through the college curriculum as well. The happiness curriculum looks to create a stimulating environment for learners in schools and if taken up to higher education, will help students to reflect better, gain insight into their thoughts and feelings, and bring about change in behavior accordingly. According to the 2015 World Happiness Report, schools that prioritize learner wellbeing have the potential to be more effective, with better learning outcomes and greater achievements in learners' lives (Layard and Hagell, 2015).

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