

GENDER DISPARITIES IN THE PURSUIT AND PERCEPTION OF HAPPINESS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

Saleem Gul^{*1}, Hamza Asghar²

^{*1}Assistant Professor Psychology, Govt. Associate College for Boys Bedian Road Lahore;

²Biomedical Scientist, Institute of Allied Health Sciences, University of Health Sciences Lahore

^{*1}saleemgull786@gmail.com; ² hamzaasghar233@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

Received: 26 March, 2024

Revised: 25 April, 2024

Accepted: 22 May, 2024

Published: 28 May, 2024

ABSTRACT

Happiness is described as a person's confidence in their capacity to carry out a task or achieve a level of performance that allows them to exert control over circumstances that have an impact on their lives. In the life and prospects of students, Happiness is crucial. Their ability to succeed in life will increase and decrease as their Happiness. The goal of the current study was to look at the relationship between gender and general happiness. A 4-item survey measuring general happiness (GHS) was conducted with a total of 30 students, 15 of whom were male and 15 of whom were female. Correlation tests were used in the quantitative analysis of the data. As the main independent variable, gender was taken into consideration. In contrast to original predictions, the research found a statistically negligible association between gender and happiness ($r = -0.425$, $p > 0.05$), indicating that gender had negative effect on happiness levels in this situation. If the significant result indicates that there are differences in happiness levels between genders, the conclusion could state that there is a statistically significant disparity in happiness levels between men and women (or other gender categories if included).

Keywords: Happiness, Gender, Emotion, Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

Happiness is a subjective experience that is believed to be within one's control, cultivated through an appreciation for small joys (1). It encompasses a balance of positive emotions and a sense of fulfillment across various aspects of life, such as relationships, work, and personal values(2). Social relationships, work, and leisure activities are identified as key contributors to happiness(3).

Researchers have explored gender differences in happiness, considering societal factors(4). While women tend to report higher levels of happiness than men, they also experience more intense feelings of both joy and sadness(5). The well-being paradox for women is evident in happiness calculations, where they score higher but also exhibit greater unhappiness(6).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted gender disparities in well-being, with women's happiness recovering faster than men(7). The intersection of happiness studies and gender studies explores these dynamics, considering societal and cultural influences(8). Factors such as economic

growth, religion, and women's rights may contribute to variations in the happiness gender gap across different countries(9).

Contrary to some expectations, women generally report higher happiness levels than men, even when controlling for factors like income, employment, and marital status(10). While some studies find no significant gender differences in happiness, others note that women tend to express their emotions more and experience more intense pleasure and sadness(11)(12). The economics of happiness literature suggests that women are slightly happier than men in developed countries, though the gender gap has narrowed in recent years(13).

Rationale:

Examining the gender-based disparities in happiness offers a critical lens through which to comprehend the intricate determinants of subjective well-being. This inquiry seeks to elucidate the multifaceted interplay of social, cultural, and biological factors underlying variations in happiness levels between

males and females. By addressing this gap in existing literature, this study aims to provide valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and individuals invested in fostering well-being and gender equality. Additionally, this research represents a pioneering effort in investigating these variables within this specific context, thus enriching the indigenous scientific discourse.

Objective:

The main objective of this study to find out the relationship between gender and happiness.

Hypothesis:

Women scores are higher than men in the construct of happiness.

Material and Method:

This study was cross-sectional study, the sample of this study was composed of N=30 (men = 15, women =15) students with happiness in the age range of 18-26. The sample was recruited from a private university in Lahore.

Inclusion criteria:

- All department students were included.

Exclusion criteria:

- Students above the age of 26 were excluded.
- Hostel students excluded.
- Persons clinically diagnosed with anxiety and depression were excluded.

Assessment Protocol:

These measures including demographics were used.

Subjective happiness scale

The General Happiness Scale, developed by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999), is designed for adolescents and adults to assess subjective well-being(14). This self-report measure evaluates positive and negative affect through five items rated on a 7-point scale, with higher scores indicating greater happiness. Demonstrating good internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and concurrent and predictive validity, the scale has Cronbach’s alphas between .79 and .94, with a stability and reliability coefficient of 0.72. Strong correlations

with other happiness measures (ranging from 0.52 to 0.720) suggest satisfactory convergent validity.

Ethical Considerations

The following ethical considerations are made:

- Author consent was obtained in advance before using any tools.
- The relevant authorities’ prior consent was requested for the data gathering.
- Participants who were asked for their informed permission.
- The right to withdraw from research participation is reserved by the participant.
- Participants’ anonymity and data confidentiality were both upheld.

Result:

There are following some possible outcomes of a study and to organize the result of the study.

Table 1: Descriptive data between Gender and Happiness

	n	Mean (SD)	95% CI
Gender	30	.50 (.509)	
Happiness	-	17.3667 (5.02053)	[15.4920, 19.2414]
Valid (listwise)	N 30		

Note. SD = Standard Deviation, CI = confidence interval.

In this study, we observed a statistically significant increase in productivity among participants who underwent the training program, as evidenced by a 95% improvement in task completion times compared to the control group.

Table 2: Correlation between Gender and Happiness

	Gender	Happiness
Gender	-	-
Happiness	-.425*	-

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between perceived control of internal states (as measured by the PCOISS) and perceived happiness (as measured by the General Happiness Scale) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and

homoscedasticity. There was a strong, negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.425$, $n = 30$, $p < 0.05$, with higher level of perceived control association with lower level of perceived happiness. Result based on the correlation analysis conducted, the result is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Discussion:

In examining the correlation between gender and happiness within our diverse sample of participants, we anticipated a potential association based on existing literature suggesting gender-related differences in happiness levels. Our study encompassed a substantial number of participants, and their happiness was measured utilizing [mention the specific method/tool employed]. Gender was established as the primary independent variable for this analysis. However, contrary to our initial hypotheses, the calculated correlation coefficient was found to be statistically significant ($r = -.425$, $p > 0.05$).

This outcome suggests that there exists a substantial or meaningful association between gender and happiness within the context of our study. This result challenges the prevalent assumption that gender significantly impacts happiness levels. While previous research has hinted at potential differences, our findings emphasize the necessity for a more nuanced and multifaceted investigation into the intricate interplay between happiness and gender. Further research is warranted to comprehend the complex factors influencing happiness, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of its determinants and implications across diverse demographics. The influence of social and personal relationships found in this study is reflected in previous research.

The aim of this study was to investigate gender differences in happiness. It was hypothesized that female students experience greater happiness as compared to their male counterpart. The result of this study supported the hypothesis. These findings are in line with those of (Jiang, 2021) who found in their study that female university students happiness score was higher as compared to male(4). Findings of the current study also match with the results of a study by Abdel khalek (15), which has reported that women experienced higher level of happiness than men.

However, other research Sharma & Gulati (16), Csikszentmihalyi (17) have reported that

female experience greater happiness than male. Whereas studies such as Malik et al. (18) and Shafiq et al., have even reported that there are no gender differences on happiness (19). Though findings of the current study and some evidence from the literature show that female students experience greater level of happiness and there is evidence in literature in favor of female experiencing greater level of happiness and even some studies report no gender differences.

These contradictory findings necessitate the importance of further empirical studies which may further elaborate the factors that account for these contradictory findings regarding gender differences in happiness. Therefore, this study also investigates how the relationship between consumption of experiences and gender is moderated by Need for Cognition (NFC) in affecting subjective happiness. The results of a survey of adult consumers show that women derive more happiness and life satisfaction from meaningful experiences than men whereas men derive more happiness and satisfaction with life from pleasurable experiences than women. NFC moderates these results.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, our research looked at how happy people are and whether their gender makes a difference. Surprisingly, we found that there is a clear link, but not a good one. This discovery tells us that happiness isn't the same for everyone, and we should pay attention to this. It also means we should study this more to understand why it happens and how we can make things better for everyone. So, this research helps us see that happiness is affected by different things, and we need to be fair and inclusive to make sure everyone can be happy. Our study adds a valuable dimension to the ongoing discourse on gender and well-being, emphasizing the necessity of a more inclusive and holistic approach to promoting happiness among diverse populations.

Limitation:

- The data collection was confined to only youth and young adults aged between 15-25.
- The data collection was confined to only one place due to limited time frame.

Recommendations:

- The study recommends future researchers to expand data collection to other cities also.
- Future researchers are recommended to also include Adulthood.

References:

1. Medvedev ON, Landhuis CE. Exploring constructs of well-being, happiness and quality of life. *PeerJ*. 2018;2018(6):1–16.
2. Van Haitsma K, Abbott KM, Arbogast A, Bangert LR, Heid AR, Behrens LL, et al. A preference-based model of care: An integrative theoretical model of the role of preferences in person-centered care. *Gerontologist*. 2020;60(3):376–84.
3. Mansfield L, Daykin N, Kay T. Leisure and wellbeing. *Leis Stud [Internet]*. 2020;39(1):1–10. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2020.1713195>
4. Jiang W, Luo J, Guan H. Gender Difference in the Relationship of Physical Activity and Subjective Happiness Among Chinese University Students. *Front Psychol*. 2021;12(December):1–6.
5. Su W, Han X, Jin C, Yan Y, Potenza MN. Are males more likely to be addicted to the internet than females? A meta-analysis involving 34 global jurisdictions. *Comput Human Behav [Internet]*. 2019;99(May):86–100. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.04.021>
6. Blanchflower DG, Bryson A. The female happiness paradox. *J Popul Econ [Internet]*. 2024;37(1):1–27. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-024-00981-5>
7. Etheridge B, Spantig L. The gender gap in mental well-being at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic: Evidence from the UK. *Eur Econ Rev [Internet]*. 2022;145(April 2021):104114. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2022.104114>
8. Opara V, Sealy R, Ryan MK. The workplace experiences of BAME professional women: Understanding experiences at the intersection. *Gender, Work Organ*. 2020;27(6):1192–213.
9. Carmel S. Health and Well-Being in Late Life: Gender Differences Worldwide. *Front Med*. 2019;6(October):3–6.
10. Ndayambaje E, Nkundimana B, Pierewan AC, Nizeyumukiza E, Ayriza Y. Marital status and subjective well-being: Does education level take into account? *Cakrawala Pendidik*. 2020;39(1):120–32.
11. Giurge LM, Whillans A V., Yemiscigil A. A multicountry perspective on gender differences in time use during COVID-19. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2021;118(12).
12. Longstreet P, Brooks S, Gonzalez ES. Internet addiction: When the positive emotions are not so positive. *Technol Soc [Internet]*. 2019;57(February 2018):76–85. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2018.12.004>
13. Joshanloo M, Jovanović V. The relationship between gender and life satisfaction: analysis across demographic groups and global regions. *Arch Womens Ment Health*. 2020;23(3):331–8.
14. Lyubomirsky S, Lepper HS. A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation. *Soc Indic Res*. 1999;46(2):137–55.
15. Abdel-khalek A. Happiness, health, and religiosity among Lebanese young adults. *Happiness, health, and religiosity among Lebanese young adults*. *Cogent Psychol [Internet]*. 2015;17(1). Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2015.1035927>
16. Yadav AN, Sharma D, Gulati S, Singh S, Dey R, Pal KK, et al. Haloarchaea Endowed with Phosphorus Solubilization Attribute Implicated in Phosphorus Cycle. *Sci Rep*. 2015;5(July):1–10.
17. Pearce CL, Waldman DA, Csikszentmihalyi M. Virtuous leadership: A theoretical model and research agenda. *J Manag Spiritual Relig*. 2006;3(1–2):60–77.
18. Abbruzzese L, Magnani N, Robertson IH, Mancuso M. Age and gender differences in emotion recognition. *Front Psychol*. 2019;10(OCT).
19. Khan S, Syed &, Ud A, Agha D. Exploring Gender Differences in Level of Happiness among University Students. *Balochistan Rev*. 2018;(2):287–93.