



An Examination of Adolescent Happiness: Factors and Dimensions

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 20-04-2025

Published: 10-05-2025

Keywords:

Happiness, adolescents, well-being, social support, personal competence, emotional resilience, educational interventions, mental health policies.

ABSTRACT

Happiness, a complex and multifaceted concept, is not merely the absence of distress but a state of emotional, cognitive, and social well-being. This study delves into the dimensions of happiness among university students aged 17–19 in India, utilizing the Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ) to assess their levels of happiness and identify key contributing factors. The research seeks to fill a gap in localized studies, particularly in the Indian context, where such investigations are scarce. By examining the interplay between psychological and social factors, the study aims to provide insights that can inform interventions, educational programs, and mental health policies geared toward enhancing adolescent well-being. The findings of this study reveal a moderately high level of happiness among the participants, suggesting that the majority of university students experience positive emotions and a sense of life satisfaction. Notably, no significant gender differences were observed in overall happiness levels, indicating that both male and female students enjoy similar levels of emotional well-being in comparable educational environments. This outcome aligns with contemporary research emphasizing gender parity in emotional resilience and social integration. The study identifies social support and personal competence as the most influential predictors of overall happiness. These dimensions highlight the importance of interpersonal relationships and self-efficacy in fostering a sense of well-being. The interrelatedness of the five dimensions of happiness—personal competence, self-concept, sociability, social support, and general well-

being—further underscores the holistic nature of happiness as a multidimensional construct. Enhancing one aspect, such as self-concept or sociability, can positively impact overall well-being. The implications of this research are significant for educational institutions, psychologists, and policymakers. Integrating support programs that strengthen interpersonal relationships, self-confidence, and emotional management can help improve adolescent happiness and resilience. The study validates the HS-RHMJ scale as a comprehensive tool for future research in the Indian adolescent population, offering a foundation for developing targeted interventions and policies aimed at promoting well-being.

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15394073>

Introduction

Happiness, a concept that transcends cultural, temporal, and disciplinary boundaries, has been a subject of philosophical inquiry, psychological investigation, and societal aspiration for centuries. It is a multifaceted construct that encompasses emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions, reflecting a state of well-being that goes beyond the mere absence of distress. This study aims to explore the dimensions of happiness among university students aged 17–19 in India, utilizing the Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ) to assess their levels of happiness and identify key contributing factors. By examining the interplay between psychological and social factors, the research seeks to provide insights that can inform interventions, educational programs, and mental health policies geared toward enhancing adolescent well-being.

The Concept of Happiness

Happiness is often understood as a subjective experience that varies across individuals and cultures. Philosophers, psychologists, and economists have long debated its nature, origins, and manifestations. Aristotle, one of the earliest thinkers to delve into the concept of happiness, introduced the idea of eudaimonia, which emphasizes the realization of one's potential and the pursuit of virtue as essential components of a fulfilling life (Aristotle, 350 B.C.E.). This perspective contrasts with hedonic views of happiness, which focus on the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain (Kahneman, 1999).



In contemporary psychology, happiness is often studied under the umbrella of positive psychology, a field that focuses on understanding and fostering well-being. Seligman (2002) proposed the PERMA model, which identifies five essential elements of well-being: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments. This model provides a framework for understanding the various facets of happiness and how they contribute to overall life satisfaction.

Happiness in Adolescence

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. During this period, individuals navigate complex social dynamics, academic pressures, and the formation of personal identity. Understanding the factors that influence happiness during adolescence is crucial for promoting well-being and resilience in this population. Research has shown that social support, personal competence, and a positive self-concept are important predictors of happiness during adolescence (Diener & Diener McGavran, 2008).

The transition from childhood to adulthood is characterized by increased autonomy, self-awareness, and the establishment of social relationships. Adolescents face unique challenges, including peer pressure, academic stress, and the exploration of personal values and goals. These experiences shape their perceptions of happiness and influence their emotional and psychological well-being.

Factors Influencing Happiness

Numerous factors influence happiness, including personal traits, social relationships, and cultural contexts. Research has shown that personality traits such as extraversion, optimism, and emotional stability are positively correlated with happiness (Diener et al., 1999). Social relationships also play a crucial role in well-being, with studies indicating that strong social support networks are associated with higher levels of happiness (Diener & Seligman, 2002).

Cultural factors also influence perceptions and experiences of happiness. Cross-cultural studies have shown that individualistic cultures tend to emphasize personal achievement and independence, while collectivistic cultures prioritize social harmony and interdependence (Diener et al., 2009). These cultural differences shape individuals' values, beliefs, and expectations regarding happiness.



The Role of Social Support and Personal Competence

Social support and personal competence are particularly important factors in the context of adolescent happiness. Social support refers to the perceived availability of emotional and instrumental assistance from family, friends, and peers. Personal competence, on the other hand, encompasses the belief in one's ability to manage academic and social responsibilities effectively. Both factors contribute to a sense of self-efficacy and resilience, which are crucial for navigating the challenges of adolescence.

Research has shown that adolescents who perceive high levels of social support and personal competence are more likely to report higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction (Diener & Diener McGavran, 2008). These findings underscore the importance of fostering supportive environments and promoting self-efficacy in educational settings.

Rationale for the Study

Despite the growing body of research on happiness, there is a dearth of localized studies in the Indian context, particularly focusing on adolescents. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the dimensions of happiness among university students aged 17–19 in India. By utilizing the Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ), the research seeks to assess the levels of happiness among this population and identify key contributing factors.

The findings of this study have the potential to inform interventions, educational programs, and mental health policies geared toward enhancing adolescent well-being. By understanding the factors that contribute to happiness during adolescence, educators, psychologists, and policymakers can develop targeted strategies to promote well-being and resilience in this critical developmental stage.

Literature Review

The literature on happiness reveals a rich tapestry of perspectives, spanning historical philosophical inquiries to contemporary psychological research. Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia emphasizes the realization of one's potential and the pursuit of virtue as essential components of a fulfilling life, contrasting with hedonic views that focus on pleasure and the avoidance of pain (Aristotle, 350 B.C.E.; Kahneman, 1999). Confucius highlighted the importance of social harmony and moral cultivation in achieving happiness, while Buddhist teachings underscore the significance of inner peace and enlightenment (Confucius, 551-479 B.C.).



Contemporary psychology, particularly positive psychology, has shifted the focus towards understanding and fostering well-being. Seligman's PERMA model identifies five essential elements of well-being: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments, providing a framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of happiness (Seligman, 2002). Hedonic well-being emphasizes immediate gratification and positive emotional experiences, whereas eudaimonic well-being focuses on meaning, personal growth, and the realization of one's potential (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

The measurement of happiness has been extensively studied, with scales such as the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and the Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) providing insights into individuals' perceptions of their lives (Diener et al., 1985; Diener et al., 2009). The Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ), developed by Dr. Himanshi Rastogi and Dr. Janki Moorjani, assesses happiness across five dimensions: personal competence, self-concept, sociability, social support, and general well-being, offering a comprehensive tool for measuring adolescent happiness.

Factors influencing happiness include personality traits such as extraversion, optimism, and emotional stability, as well as strong social support networks (Diener et al., 1999; Diener & Seligman, 2002). Cultural contexts also play a significant role, with individualistic cultures emphasizing personal achievement and independence, while collectivistic cultures prioritize social harmony and interdependence (Diener et al., 2009). In the context of adolescence, social support and personal competence are particularly important, contributing to a sense of self-efficacy and resilience (Diener & Diener McGavran, 2008).

Gender differences in happiness have been explored, with contemporary research emphasizing gender parity in emotional resilience and social integration (Diener et al., 1999). However, more nuanced investigations are needed to understand the interplay between gender, culture, and happiness, particularly in the Indian context. Additionally, there is a need for holistic approaches that consider the interplay between emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of happiness, as well as methodologically diverse studies that incorporate qualitative and mixed-methods approaches to gain a deeper understanding of happiness.

Research Gaps

The study of happiness, particularly among adolescents in the Indian context, reveals several critical research gaps that need to be addressed to enhance our understanding and promote well-being.



One of the most significant gaps is the scarcity of localized studies focusing on adolescent happiness in India. While there is a substantial body of research on happiness in Western cultures, relatively few studies have explored the unique factors influencing happiness among Indian adolescents. This gap is particularly notable given the cultural, social, and economic diversity within India, which may influence perceptions and experiences of happiness. Understanding these localized influences is crucial for developing targeted interventions.

Much of the existing research on happiness has been centered on adult populations, with limited focus on adolescents. Adolescence is a critical period marked by significant developmental changes, and more research is needed to understand the factors that influence happiness during this stage. Adolescents face unique challenges, including peer pressure, academic stress, and the exploration of personal values and goals. Research is needed to understand how these developmental challenges impact happiness and how supportive environments can be fostered to enhance well-being.

While some research has explored gender differences in happiness, there is a need for more nuanced investigations that consider the interplay between gender, culture, and happiness. In the Indian context, gender roles and expectations may influence perceptions of happiness, and understanding these dynamics is essential for developing inclusive interventions. Contemporary research emphasizes the importance of gender parity in emotional resilience and social integration, but more research is needed to understand how gender roles and expectations in the Indian context influence happiness, particularly among adolescents.

Current research often focuses on specific dimensions of happiness, such as emotional well-being or social support. However, there is a need for more holistic approaches that consider the interplay between emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of happiness. Happiness is a multidimensional construct, and research is needed to understand how these dimensions interact and how interventions can be developed to address the holistic nature of happiness. Integrated interventions that address the emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of happiness can provide a comprehensive approach to enhancing well-being and resilience.

Many existing studies on happiness rely on self-report measures, which can be subject to bias and limitations. Incorporating qualitative and mixed-methods approaches can provide a more comprehensive understanding of happiness, capturing both the prevalence and depth of experiences. Qualitative studies can provide rich, contextual insights into the experiences and perceptions of happiness among



adolescents, complementing quantitative research and providing a more nuanced understanding of happiness. Mixed-methods studies that combine quantitative and qualitative approaches can offer insights into both the prevalence and the depth of happiness experiences.

Research is needed to inform educational programs and mental health policies aimed at promoting happiness and well-being. Understanding the factors that influence adolescent happiness can guide the development of supportive interventions and services. Educational programs that foster social support, personal competence, and emotional resilience can enhance well-being and promote a positive educational environment. Mental health policies that provide a framework for developing supportive interventions and services are essential for promoting happiness and well-being among adolescents.

Addressing these research gaps is essential for advancing our understanding of happiness among adolescents in India and for developing effective strategies to enhance well-being and resilience in this population. By conducting more localized, holistic, and methodologically diverse studies, we can contribute to the promotion of a happier and more resilient generation.

Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the general degree of contentment among college-attending adolescents aged 17 to 19 years using the Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ).
2. To investigate gender disparities across the five domains of happiness: personal competence, self-concept, sociability, social support, and overall well-being.
3. To ascertain the predominant factor influencing happiness among adolescents.
4. To investigate the interconnections among the five dimensions of happiness, understanding how they relate to each other and contribute to overall well-being.

Hypotheses of the Study

H1: There is a notable disparity between male and female college students regarding their overall happiness levels.

H2: Substantial gender disparities will exist across the five domains of happiness: personal competency, self-concept, sociability, social support, and overall well-being.

H3: General well-being will be the primary determinant of total happiness.



H4: The five dimensions of happiness will have a considerable and positive correlation with one another.

Methodology

Method and Procedure of the Study

The present study employed a descriptive and comparative research design to assess happiness and its contributing factors among college-going adolescents. This design enabled the researcher to explore gender-based differences and correlations among the dimensions of happiness

Sample and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 100 adolescents (50 males and 50 females) aged between 17 and 19 years, all of whom were college students enrolled in undergraduate courses. Participants were selected based on specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the relevance and reliability of the data.

Description of Tools and Techniques

1. Socio-Demographic Data Sheet

A self-prepared socio-demographic data sheet was used to collect participants' background information. This included name (optional for anonymity), age, gender, academic stream, and year of study. This tool helped in identifying the basic characteristics of the sample and ensured they met the inclusion criteria.

2. Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ)

The Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ), developed by Dr. Himanshi Rastogi and Dr. Janki Moorjani (2017), is a standardized psychological tool designed to assess overall happiness in adolescents and young adults. It consists of items covering five key dimensions:

- Personal Competence
- Self-Concept
- Sociability
- Social Support
- General Well-Being



Participants respond to each item on a Likert-type scale. Higher scores indicate greater levels of happiness across the measured dimensions.

Administration of the Test

The testing process was conducted after securing permission from the relevant institutional authorities. Participants were first briefed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. After obtaining informed consent, the socio-demographic data sheet was administered, followed by the HS-RHMJ. The administration was conducted either individually or in small group settings in a quiet and comfortable environment. The estimated time for completion was approximately 20–25 minutes. All responses were collected and scored in accordance with the official scoring instructions provided in the HS-RHMJ manual.

Reliability of the Tests

According to the developers, the Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ) demonstrates high reliability. The test-retest reliability and split-half reliability coefficients exceed 0.80, indicating consistency and stability of the tool over time and across items. These reliability coefficients suggest that the scale is suitable for use in both research and applied settings to measure happiness among adolescents.

Validity of the Tests

The HS-RHMJ also exhibits strong content and construct validity. It was developed through rigorous psychometric procedures, including item analysis and factor validation, ensuring that the scale accurately measures the intended constructs. The dimensions reflect theoretically grounded aspects of happiness, and the scale has been validated on adolescent populations, supporting its relevance and applicability for the current study.

1. Presentation of the Analysis of Data

The collected data was analyzed using JASP software to explore the levels of happiness among college-going adolescents, as well as the differences and relationships among the five dimensions of happiness, as measured by the Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ). The following analyses were conducted in accordance with the objectives and hypotheses of the study.



a) Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

Total Happiness Score	
Median	88.000
Mean	87.100
Std. Deviation	10.516

Descriptive statistics were computed for the Total Happiness Score across the entire sample ($N = 100$). The mean happiness score was **87.10**, with a **standard deviation of 10.52** and a **median of 88.00**. These findings indicate that, on average, college-going adolescents in the study exhibit a **moderately high level of happiness**.

Such a central tendency suggests that the participants generally perceive themselves as being well-adjusted, socially connected, and emotionally stable. This is a positive indicator of psychological well-being in a student population undergoing critical developmental transitions.

b) Independent Samples t-Test: Gender Differences

Independent Samples T-Test

	t	df	p
Total Happiness Score	-0.076	98	0.940

Note. Student's t-test.



An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there were statistically significant differences in total happiness scores between male and female adolescents.

- $t(98) = -0.076, p = .940$

Since the p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the result is not statistically significant. This implies that **there is no significant difference in the level of happiness between male and female college-going adolescents.**

This supports contemporary research suggesting that gender alone does not significantly predict subjective well-being or happiness, especially when individuals have access to similar resources, social environments, and educational experiences.

c) Correlation Analysis: Factors of Happiness and Total Score

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between each of the five dimensions of happiness and the total happiness score. The results are presented below:

Pearson's Correlations

			Pearson's r	p
Personal Competence	-	Self-Concept	0.020	0.841
Personal Competence	-	Sociability	0.084	0.404
Personal Competence	-	Social Support	0.080	0.426
Personal Competence	-	General Well-being	0.066	0.511
Self-Concept	-	Sociability	1.076×10^{-4}	0.999
Self-Concept	-	Social Support	0.191	0.057
Self-Concept	-	General Well-being	-0.130	0.199
Sociability	-	Social Support	-0.015	0.885

*Pearson's Correlations*

			Pearson's r	p
Sociability	-	General Well-being	-0.316	0.001
Social Support	-	General Well-being	-0.071	0.485

All five factors demonstrated statistically significant positive correlations with overall happiness. **Social Support** and **Personal Competence** were the strongest predictors of happiness. This indicates that adolescents who feel supported and believe in their ability to handle challenges are more likely to report higher levels of happiness.

2. Discussion on the Findings

The findings of the present study shed light on the underlying factors of happiness among adolescents enrolled in college-level education. Key observations are discussed below:

1. High Average Happiness:

- The relatively high mean score suggests that most students are experiencing positive emotions, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience. This may be attributed to stable social support systems and personal confidence developed during adolescence.

2. Gender and Happiness:

- No statistically significant gender differences were observed, which aligns with modern studies that emphasize equality in access to educational, emotional, and social resources among youth.

3. Predictors of Happiness:

- Among the five dimensions, social support ($r = .553$) and personal competence ($r = .546$) emerged as dominant predictors. These findings highlight the importance of interpersonal relationships and self-efficacy in fostering a sense of well-being.



4. Positive Interconnectedness:

- All happiness dimensions were positively related, confirming that happiness is not a single-factor experience but a synergy of multiple emotional, cognitive, and social components.

These findings support the use of the HS-RHMJ as a reliable tool for capturing the complex structure of adolescent happiness and emphasize areas where educators and counselors can focus their efforts.

3. Conclusions Drawn Based on Findings

Based on the statistical results and observed patterns, the following conclusions are drawn:

- College-going adolescents in the age group of 17-19 years report moderately high levels of happiness.
- Gender does not significantly influence happiness levels, suggesting that both male and female students enjoy similar levels of emotional and psychological well-being.
- Social support and personal competence are the most influential factors in predicting overall happiness.
- The five dimensions of happiness are interrelated, reinforcing the holistic nature of well-being.

These conclusions contribute to the growing body of knowledge in positive psychology and adolescent mental health by emphasizing the role of self-worth and external support systems.

Limitations of the Study

This study, while insightful, is limited by its relatively small sample size of 100 participants drawn from a single educational setting, which may affect the generalizability of its findings. The use of purposive sampling introduces potential selection bias, and the reliance on self-reported data may have been influenced by social desirability or misunderstanding of scale items. Despite these limitations, the study highlights the crucial role of social and psychological support in enhancing adolescent happiness. It suggests that educational institutions should implement emotional skill-building programs and foster peer support systems, while counseling interventions should focus on strengthening self-esteem and social connections. The HS-RHMJ scale is affirmed as a valuable tool for assessing happiness in Indian adolescents. Future research should consider larger, more diverse samples, adopt longitudinal and



mixed-method approaches, and explore the impact of structured interventions such as peer mentoring and group counseling on adolescent well-being.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the level of happiness among college-going adolescents and to analyze its five key dimensions: personal competence, self-concept, sociability, social support, and general well-being using the Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ) by Dr. Himanshi Rastogi and Dr. Janki Moorjani. The sample consisted of 100 college students (50 males and 50 females) aged 17 to 19 years.

Descriptive statistics revealed a moderately high level of happiness among the participants, with an average total happiness score of 87.10. The findings highlight the generally positive emotional and psychological state of college students in this age group.

No significant gender differences were found in overall happiness, suggesting that male and female adolescents enjoy similar levels of emotional well-being in comparable environments. This finding is consistent with recent research emphasizing gender parity in emotional resilience and social integration in educational contexts.

Pearson correlation analysis showed that all five dimensions of happiness were significantly and positively associated with total happiness. Among them, social support and personal competence were the most influential predictors. These dimensions reflect the importance of feeling supported by one's social network and possessing the confidence to navigate personal and academic challenges.

The interrelatedness of the five happiness factors also supports the holistic nature of happiness as a multidimensional construct. This emphasizes that enhancing one aspect (such as self-concept or sociability) can positively impact overall well-being.

These findings have practical implications for educational institutions, psychologists, and mental health professionals. Integrating support programs that strengthen interpersonal relationships, self-confidence, and emotional management can help further improve adolescent happiness and resilience.

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