



Hope and learned optimism as predictors of happiness in students

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Abstract: *The present research was executed to elucidate the role of hope and learned optimism on happiness of students. The sample consisted of 50 students studying post graduate courses in a university. They were assessed by hope scale, learned optimism scale and happiness scale. The results of correlation coefficient indicated that all of the studied variables were positively significantly correlated with happiness. Also, the regression analysis showed that hope and learned optimism could predict happiness significantly. The implications and limitations of the research are discussed.*

Key Words: *hope, learned optimism, happiness and students*

1. INTRODUCTION

Students are the greatest resource of a nation. They are to be given appropriate guidance and counseling so that they can lead their lives successfully. The need to be happy is an urgent requirement for students. They need happiness to lead life successfully. The present study is an attempt in making an understanding of how self- efficacy and learned optimism contribute to the happiness in students.

Hope

Hope is an optimistic state of mind that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes with respect to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large. As a verb, its definitions include: "expect with confidence" and "to cherish a desire with anticipation" Among its opposites are dejection, hopelessness and despair.

Professor of Psychology Barbara Fredrickson argues that hope comes into its own when crisis looms, opening us to new creative possibilities. Frederickson argues that with great need comes an unusually wide range of ideas, as well as such positive emotions as happiness and joy, courage, and empowerment, drawn from four different areas of one's self: from a cognitive, psychological, social, or physical perspective. Hopeful people are "like the little engine that could, [because] they keep telling themselves "I think I can, I think I can". Such positive thinking bears fruit when based on a realistic sense of optimism, not on a naive "false hope".

Learned optimism

Scheier and Carver (1985) have defined optimism "as a generalized expectancy that

good as opposed to bad outcomes will generally occur when confronted with problems across important life domains.” Learned optimism is a sense of enthusiasm, confidence and control, which develops once one achieves small successes. According to Martin Seligman (1991), how an individual thinks about events in his /her life greatly affects the kinds of actions he / she take. Learned optimism is having a strong expectation that despite the inevitable setbacks and frustrations, events and experiences will eventually turn out alright.

Happiness

Happiness is a positive emotional state. It involves the detailed evaluation of one’s current position in the world. It is the sum total of positive effect and general life satisfaction. It is flourishing of human beings and associated with living a life of virtue. The happiness level of a person is governed by three factors which are a set point for happiness, happiness relevant circumstantial factors, and happiness-producing activities and practices. There are two traditions on happiness. They are eudemonic and hedonic.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Review of related literature is an important pre-requisite for actual planning and carrying out of any research work. The present section represents a brief review of the researches done in the area related to the present investigation.

Bernardo, Allan B. I. et al. (2016) said that positive education emphasizes the role of hope in student achievement and in buffering the effects of students' difficulties in school. In this study, we demonstrate how internal and external loci-of-hope relate to students' use of different learning strategies in school. We asked 967 university students from four cities to answer the locus-of-hope scales, cognitive strategy scales, and engager collaborative learning scales. Separate regression analyses of data from the four cities indicate that internal locus-of-hope consistently predicted use of all three individual learning strategies (except for rehearsal in the Manila sample), whereas, external-peer locus-of-hope consistently predicted use of collaborative learning strategies. The findings extend previous findings on hope and learning by showing how hope relates to the learning strategies adopted by students. Moreover, the study extends theorizing about hope in schools by showing how relational hopeful thoughts that draw from shared agency with classmates are associated with collaborative learning strategies.

Roebben, Bert (2107) said that in writing this article it became clear to the author that, more than ever before, the reasons for hope need to be consciously collected, reflected, and re-enacted by teachers and educators who are really prepared and able to make a difference in the long run. In this article the idea of hope in education is developed in three steps: a philosophical, an educational, and a theological one. First of all, hope is defined as a deliberate "dimension of the soul" (Havel), suggesting that readers should engage in radical existentialism. Secondly, hope is explained in an educational setting as "the practice of overcoming isolation," the practice of learning to say "Thou" in the immediate presence of and encounter with the other. Finally,

hope is imagined theologically as an eschatological surplus, reframed as "the audacity of hope" (Caputo) in the struggle for a better world.

Ojala, Maria (2015) conducted a study on Swedish high school students identified two kinds of hope: constructive hope and hope based on denial. Constructive hope was positively associated with engagement and a perception that teachers respect students' negative emotions concerning societal issues and have a future-oriented, positive, and solution-oriented communication style. Students who felt hope based on denial instead were less inclined to behave pro-environmentally and perceived their teachers as not taking their emotions seriously and as communicating in a pessimistic way. Boys perceived their teachers as less accepting of negative emotions, which explained why they felt more hope based on denial than girls. Practical implications of these findings are discussed.

Beard, Karen Stansberry et al (2010) said that teacher sense of academic optimism is individual teachers' beliefs that they can teach effectively, their students can learn, and parents will support them so the teacher can press hard for learning. This new construct is grounded in the social cognitive and self-efficacy theories, social capital theory, work on school culture and climate and research on learned optimism. At the school level, collective academic optimism has been related to academic performance. The analyses tested and supported the validity and reliability of the construct at the individual level with elementary school teachers in a confirmatory factor analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Hong, Fu-Yuan (2017) said that the main purpose of this research was to examine the relationships among school principals' transformational leadership, school academic optimism, teachers' academic optimism and teachers' professional commitment. This study conducted a questionnaire survey on 367 teachers from 20 high schools in Taiwan by random sampling, using principals' transformational leadership scale, a school academic optimism scale, teachers' academic optimism scale, and teachers' professional commitment scale. The results of confirmatory factor analysis showed that there is good fit in the factor structure of school academic optimism and teachers' academic optimism. The results of the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis and path analysis revealed that principals' transformational leadership has a positive effect on school academic optimism and teachers' academic optimism. School academic optimism has a positive effect on teachers' academic optimism. Principals' transformational leadership and teachers' academic optimism have a positive effect on teachers' professional commitment. Finally, this research offers some suggestions based on the results.

Bojesen, Emile (2018) said that the primary purpose of this paper is to outline the conceptual means by which it is possible to be optimistic about education. To provide this outline I turn to Ian Hunter and David Blacker, after a brief introduction to Nietzsche's conceptions of optimism and pessimism, to show why certain forms of optimism in education are either intellectually unhelpful or dispositionally helpless in the face of current educational issues. The alternative form of optimism--which I argue is both intellectually and practically helpful--is drawn from a reading of

Friedrich Nietzsche. This reading of Nietzsche is not a simple exercise representing his views. As Nietzsche never explicitly advocated for any form of optimism--and frequently advocated against many of its manifestations--drawing what I call "a new version of optimism" from his writings is no straightforward task, and certainly not without risk. As such, I have extended my readings of Nietzsche across his entire oeuvre, including his writings unintended for publication from his Nachlass. At the core of my argument is the claim that when Nietzsche was sketching out what he called "a new version of pessimism" (Nietzsche in "Writings from the late notebooks," Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003: 173), it was actually quite close to what we might now call "a new version of optimism." This first claim precipitates a second, which is that this new version of optimism is not only especially suited to contemporary educational thought and practice but is itself a description of an educational experience and disposition.

Elwick, Alex (2017) explained that this paper investigates the higher education literature surrounding happiness and related notions: satisfaction, despair, flourishing and well-being. It finds that there is a real dearth of literature relating to profound happiness in higher education: much of the literature using the terms happiness and satisfaction interchangeably as if one were tantamount to the other, such conflation being due to the move towards consumerism within higher education and the marketisation of the sector. What literature there exists that actually deals with the profound happiness of students in higher education, generally argues that in the United Kingdom institutions do not currently do enough to promote happiness in higher education. These findings imply that flourishing, contentment and well-being should be regarded as legitimate goals of higher education, alongside satisfaction and related economic outcomes that are currently promoted across academic and policy literature, university rankings and the National Student Survey.

Batik, Meryem et al (2017) said that this research was conducted to investigate the forgiveness and subjective happiness level of university students in terms of gender, faculty, grade, residence, and parental attitudes, and to determine predictive role of forgiveness on subjective happiness. The study group consists of 828 university students (56.3% female, 43.7% male). The data was collected through the Forgiveness Scale and the Subjective Happiness Scale. The results of the study indicated that the level of forgiveness and subjective happiness of university students did not differ significantly in terms of gender and residence. On the other hand, it was found that the forgiveness level of third and fourth grade students and students who enrolled in Faculty of Theology were significantly higher than the other students. Moreover, the students whose parents are protective and democratic attitudes reported significantly higher levels of forgiveness and subjective happiness. There is a positive relationship but low between forgiveness and subjective happiness and; forgiveness was found as a significant predictor of subjective happiness.

Flynn, Deborah M et al (2015) said that this study explored the relationship between happiness, and six other life domains: Academic Success, Financial Security, Familial Support, Living Environment, Self-Image and Social Relations. Participants were one

hundred and ninety- two students from a small undergraduate university. The purpose of the study was to determine which life domain had the greatest influence on student happiness. Assessment tools included the Oxford Happiness Inventory, the Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale, and a Financial Success Survey created by the authors. Results indicate that Self-esteem, Academic Success and Financial Security, respectively, explained most of the variance in student happiness.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- To study the relationship between hope, learned optimism and happiness among students in University.
- To assess the role of hope and learned optimism on happiness among students in University.

Hypotheses

- There is positive and significant relationship between hope, learned optimism and happiness among students in University.
- There is positive and significant contribution of hope on happiness among students in University.
- There is positive and significant contribution of learned optimism on happiness among students in University.

4. METHODS:

Sample

Participants: Sample of the study consisted of 50 students; their age range was 20 to 25. There are 25 males and 25 females. They were selected by snowball sampling technique from a University.

Tools

4.1. Hope Scale

Adult hope scale developed by Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J. R., Holleran, S. A., Irving, L. M., Sigmon, S. T., et al.(1991). A 12-item measure of a respondent's level of hope. In particular the scale is divided into two subscales that comprise Snyder's cognitive model of hope: (1) Agency (i.e., goal-directed energy) and (2) Pathways (i.e., planning to accomplish goals). Of the 12 items, 4 make up the Agency subscale and 4 make up the Pathways subscale. The remaining 4 items are fillers. Each item is answered using an 8-point Likert-type scale ranging from Definitely False to Definitely True. It should be noted that the authors recommend that when administering the scale, it is called "The Future Scale".

4.2 Learned Optimism Scale

Learned optimism scale developed by Pethe, Chaudhari, Dhar and Upinder Dhar was used. This scale has set of 22 statements related to one's behavior. Five possible modes of responses are provided, such as : Strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Higher the scores, higher is the learned optimism.

4.3 Happiness Scale

Happiness scale developed by Rastogi and Moorjani was used. This scale has set of 62 statements related to one's behavior. Five possible modes of responses are

provided, such as : Strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Higher the scores, higher is the happiness.

Procedure The students were approached and asked to complete the questionnaires of self- efficacy, learned optimism and happiness. All the respondents were also told that their anonymity will be preserved and their responses will be confidential. After that questionnaires were collected from the respondents and scored manually.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients among independents variables with dependent variable (n=50)

Variables	M(SD)	Happiness
Hope	66.00 (2.22)	0.430**
Learned optimism	106.22 (2.56)	0.187
Happiness	286.32 (1.52)	

** p<0.01

As shown in table 1, the mean and standard deviation of hope, learned optimism, happiness were 66.00(SD=2.22), 106.22(SD=2.56) and 286.32 (SD=1.52) respectively. The table shows the correlation coefficients of hope with happiness. All correlation were positive statistical significant (all ps.<.001).

Table 2 Effects of Hope and Learned optimism on happiness

Variable	MR	RS	F R	B	t	P
Intercept	0.440	0.194	5.639* P<.001	261.795	28.257	.000
Hope				0.279	3.041	.004
Learned optimism				0.058	0.723	.473

**p<0.01, *p<0.05)

A multiple regression was run to predict happiness from hope and learned optimism. The results showed that the prediction model was fitted and the variables statistically, significantly predicted, F=5.639, p<0.001, R²=0.194. Furthermore, the unstandardized coefficients (Bs) showed that Hope and learned optimism significantly predicted happiness. Also, the general form of the equation to predict happiness from hope and learned optimism is predicted happiness=261.795+(0.279 x hope)+ (0.058 x learned optimism).

6. CONCLUSION:

Consequently, it is concluded that hope and learned optimism are positively and significantly correlated with happiness. It is also concluded that hope and learned optimism are having significant variance on happiness of students. It means that the people having greater level of hope most probably experience better happiness and vice versa. Because, people who have high level of hope are expected to tackle bad circumstances more conveniently as compare to low level of hope. So that it may

inferred that people are having high level of hope and high level of learned optimism may also have excellent level of happiness.

Suggestion

The findings of study show a glimpse of the impact of student's hope and learned optimism on happiness. However, more researches are needed to study the moderating factors of happiness among different professions, culture as well as age groups. The findings of students could be compared with those found in other area of the world to decode similarities and differences.

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