



Self- efficacy and learned optimism as predictors of happiness in students

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Abstract: *The present research was executed to elucidate the role of self -efficacy and learned optimism on happiness of students. The sample consisted of 60 students studying post graduate courses in a university. They were assessed by self- efficacy 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 self -efficacy and learned optimism could predict happiness significantly. The implications and limitations of the research are discussed.*

Key Words: *self –efficacy, 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.

Self- Efficacy

Self- efficacy is a learned human pattern of thinking and is not inherited. Bandura (1997) says it is the belief of people in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions. Maddux (2009) says it is what people can do with their skills under certain conditions. It begins in infancy and continues throughout life. It is based on the social cognitive theory which says human beings shape their own lives rather than accepting the environmental forces. The frontal and prefrontal lobes of human brain are centers in brain for self -efficacy. Self –efficacy is necessary for coping with various psychological problems. It influences physical health by increasing healthy behavior. It is a common factor in various psychotherapies.

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.

Mallari, Shedy Dee C etal (2003) determined salient themes of female individuals who are inside the academic setting on their concept of happiness and moral development. The idea of studying the Filipina Female Concept of Happiness came from two areas of study--Female Psychology and Positive Psychology. The researchers were intrigued by the idea that since the female brain is influenced by various amounts of hormones during different stages in their life, affecting their perceptions, emotions and behaviors and perhaps it will show differences in the concept of happiness and moral development. Content analysis of interviews and essays from 12 participants suggested that compared to emerging adults, early teens and late teens attributed their happiness more on extrinsic factors. The results showed that as Filipinas grow older, their concept of happiness became more intrinsic. The study explored the Filipina's concept of happiness and moral development.

Chorro, Estefanía Gomis etal (2017) intended to assess the level at which students prioritize happiness; and discern how the experience of happiness affects the formation of their identity and their relationship with their environment, taking into account the values deduced from their perceptions, and understanding from where these values come, as well as how they are applied in their daily life. The findings indicate that students in fifth or sixth grade value happiness as a necessary aspect of life, derived from criteria such as health, and friends and family. The concept of happiness, however, is learned at home with parents and families.

Flynn, Deborah M etal (2015) 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.

Kapikiran, Sahin et al (2016) examined the role of self-esteem as a mediator in the relationships between optimism and psychological resilience on depressive symptoms in university students. A total of 494 undergraduate students, comprising of 253 female and 241 male participated in this study. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 30 ($M = 20.85$, $SD = 1.57$). Instruments measuring optimism, psychological resilience, self-esteem and depression were administered to university students from different faculties and departments. Application of a structural equation model to the obtained data resulted in a direct relationship between optimism and psychological resilience with symptoms of depression. In addition, it was determined that self-esteem is a full mediator between psychological resilience and depressive symptoms. The mediator role of self-esteem between optimism and depressive symptoms; however, did not reach statistically significant levels. The findings are discussed within the self-esteem, optimism, and resilience in an individual's mental health context.

Phan, Huy P et al (2016) explored a conceptual model that depicted four major orientations: optimism, self-efficacy, and academic well-being. An important question for consideration, in this case, involved the testing of different untested trajectories that could explain and predict individuals' mastery-approach goal orientations. This research investigation, in particular, is of significance for its unexploratory nature, and its findings, we contend, would contribute to our understanding of individuals' academic and learning patterns. Data were collected across six separate time points, and path analytical procedures were used to test the hypothesized relationships. M"Plus" 7.3 produced a number of notable findings, emphasizing mediating mechanisms and interesting trajectories, for example: (1) the impact of enactive learning experience on Time 1 optimism and Time 3 self-efficacy, (2) the positive impact of Time 1 optimism on Time 2 motivation towards learning, and on Time 3 self-efficacy, (3) the direct impact of Time 1 optimism on Time 6 mastery-approach goals, mediated by Time 4 optimism and then Time 5 motivation towards learning. This evidence, overall, is substantive in terms of making theoretical contributions, as well as informing sound pedagogical practices for consideration and implementation.

Aksoy, Nil et al (2014) analysed the relationship between university students' attitude to listening to music and their level of optimism. The study group for the research consists of 508 students who studied at Aksaray University in the 2012-13 academic year. Simple random sampling is used. In this study, the "Attitude Scale for Listening to Music" and the "Optimism Scale", which were developed by the researcher, are used for measurement. According to the findings of the research study, there is a significant correlation at the level of 0.430 between students' attitudes to listening to music and their level of optimism. The level of optimism has a positive impact on the attitude to listening to music at the level of 0.184.

Malinauskas, Romualdas K.(2017) investigated the effectiveness of training module on enhancing self-efficacy in teacher education students . Sixty-eight (68) teacher education students (M age = 22.74; $SD = 0.57$) participated in this study, 36 of whom

were assigned to an experimental group and the other 32 were assigned to a control group. The training module on enhancing self-efficacy composed of 26 one-hour sessions was applied on experimental group. A pretest-posttest control group design was used in order to assess the effectiveness of the training module as well as to collect data. A General Self-efficacy Scale, a Social Self-efficacy Scale, and a Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale were used. The findings showed that this training module on enhancing social self-efficacy was effective on the teacher education students' general self-efficacy, social self-efficacy, and teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

McKim, Aaron J et al (2017) explored the relationship between teacher development experiences and the self-efficacy of early career agriculture teachers. Three teacher development experiences were of interest: (a) pre service coursework, (b) student teaching, and (c) professional development. Teacher development experiences were analyzed in relation to classroom management self-efficacy, instructional strategies self-efficacy, leadership self-efficacy, science teaching self-efficacy, and math teaching self-efficacy. The relationships between development experiences and self-efficacy were analyzed through five linear regressions with teacher development experiences as independent variables and the five areas of self-efficacy as separate dependent variables. Only statistically insignificant relationships were identified for classroom management self-efficacy and instructional strategies self-efficacy. Student teaching and professional development were statistically significant, positive predictors of leadership self-efficacy. Professional development was also identified as a statistically significant, positive predictor of science teaching self-efficacy. Additionally, pre service coursework was a significant, positive predictor of math teaching self-efficacy. Findings are discussed in relation to the social cognitive theory, with emphasis on practical recommendations to enhance teacher development.

Arslan, Emel (2017) investigated the effect of preschool teachers' collective self-efficacy. A study group consists of 172 preschool teachers who are working in public preschools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in different cities of Turkey. In this study, teacher self-efficiency scale is employed to assess professional efficiency perception of teachers. Schwarzer et al have developed the scale, Sünbül and Arslan studied validity and validity of scale, and adopted it to Turkish. For identifying teachers' collective self-efficacy, the Collective Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Arslan and Sünbül (2006) has been applied. In data analysis, Pearson product-moment correlation, and simple linear regression analysis method has been used. As a result of the study, it was found that there was a positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and collective self-efficacy. Besides, it was found that teachers' self-efficacy significantly explain collective self-efficacy.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- To study the relationship between self -efficacy, learned optimism and happiness among students .
- To assess the role of self -efficacy and learned optimism on happiness among students.

Hypotheses

- There is positive and significant relationship between self- efficacy, learned optimism and happiness among students.
- There is positive and significant contribution of self -efficacy on happiness among students.
- There is positive and significant contribution of learned optimism on happiness among students.

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. Self - efficacy Scale

Self- efficacy scale developed by Mathur and Bhatnagar was used. This scale has a set of 22 statements related to our personal attitude. Five possible modes of responses are provided, such as: Strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Higher the scores , higher is the level of self –efficacy.

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

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

Variables	M(SD)	Happiness
Self- Efficacy	85.12(11.27)	.785**
Learned Optimism	101.74(13.69)	.957**
Happiness	268.96(68.43)	

**p<0.01

As shown in table 1, the mean and standard deviation of self-efficacy, learned optimism and happiness were 85.12(SD=11.27), 101.74(SD=13.69) and 268.96(68.43) respectively. The table shows the correlation coefficients of self-

efficacy and learned optimism with happiness. All correlations were positive statistically significant (all $p < .001$).

Table 2 Effects of Self-efficacy and Learned Optimism on Happiness

Variables	MR	RS	F P	B	t	P
Intercept	.985 ^a	.970	748.208 P<.001	-261.762	-18.801	.000
Self- Efficacy				2.288	9.162	.000
Learned Optimism				3.303	16.067	.000

** $p < 0.01$ * $p < 0.05$

A multiple regression was run to predict happiness from self-efficacy and learned optimism. The results showed that the prediction model was fitted and the variables statistically, significantly predicted happiness, $F=748.208$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2=.970$. Furthermore, the unstandardized coefficients(Bs) showed that self-efficacy and learned optimism significantly predicted happiness. Also, the general form of the equation to predict happiness from self-efficacy and learned optimism is predicted happiness= $-261.762 + (2.288 \times \text{self-efficacy}) + (3.303 \times \text{learned optimism})$.

DISCUSSION:

This study aimed to predict happiness in terms of self -efficacy and learned optimism. As expected, the results of correlation analysis showed that self- efficacy and learned optimism were positively correlated with happiness. As expected, the results of correlation analysis showed that all of criterion variables were positively correlated with happiness. Self- efficacy was positively correlated with happiness. Thus a person with higher level of self- efficacy will have higher levels of happiness. There was also a significant and positive correlation between learned optimism and happiness. Both the criterion variables predicted happiness significantly. Thus a person with high level of learned optimism will have more happiness than a person with low level of learned optimism. In other words, people who are positive and optimistic will have more happiness.

6. CONCLUSION:

Consequently, it is concluded that self- efficacy and learned optimism are positively and significantly correlated with happiness. It is also concluded that self -efficacy and learned optimism are having significant variance on happiness of students. It means that the people having greater level of self -efficacy most probably experience better happiness and vice versa. Because, people who have high level of self- efficacy expected to tackle bad circumstances more conveniently as compare to low level of self -efficacy. So that it may inferred that people are having high self -efficacy may have excellent level of happiness. Moreover, the study also show that people who have high score in learned optimism also have high score in happiness. Thus people who have an optimistic attitude towards life will have higher levels of happiness.

Suggestion

The findings of study show a glimpse of the impact of student’s self-efficacy 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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