

Comparative Study between Happiness and Adjustment Levels of Middle School Students and High School Students

Shiv S. Juneja^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical transitional period in every teenager's life and is marked by a plethora of physiological, physical and psychological changes, as well as a melange of polar emotions. Adolescents tend to seek autonomy from parental figures and want independence in domains of education and decision making. Furthermore, as explained in Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages in 1968 of development, adolescents search for their personal identity and seek to achieve their sense of the self. This is marked by a phase of exploration - the experimental stage that is called the 'moratorium' - which, if marked by successful identity achievement, may lead to the formation of one's own set of beliefs on what is right and wrong, their own moral system. This success is marked by a formed sense of the self, which allows adolescents to accept individual differences and keep them from conforming to societal pressures. An alternate outcome of this phase is 'identity crisis', which causes an adolescent to have an unclear sense of the self and it leads to a prolonged stage of experimentation, in the journey to find oneself. This may be dangerous if it leads to delinquency, substance abuse, eating disorders, etc.

The primary aim of this study is to examine the difference in adjustment and happiness between students of middle school (age 12-14 years) and high school (age 15-18 years). The sample size consists of 30 middle school and 30 high school students. Tests employed were 'Satisfaction With Life Scale' based on 'subjective well-being' by Ed Diener (1984). Following the collection of data, the raw scores were analyzed using Ed Diener's standardized analysis for SWLS.

Keywords: *Adolescence, Adjustment, Emotion, Subjective Well-Being, Happiness.*

Happiness has been deemed to be one of the prime life goals according to Buddhist philosophy. It is considered to be a multifaceted constituent of processes regarding one's unconscious mind, cognition, and motivation. These processes are unique to how one

¹ (Aspiring Psychologist, Vasant Valley, 3 Shakuntla Farms, MG Road, New Delhi, India)

*[Responding Author](#)

Received: June 20, 2018; Revision Received: July 6, 2018; Accepted: July 20, 2018

Comparative Study between Happiness and Adjustment Levels of Middle School Students and High School Students

appraises their life. Studies by Crossley and Landridge (2005) prove that happiness constitutes of a high self-esteem, positive self-concept and a high level of self-confidence. Research undertaken by Schiffrin and Nelson (2010) proves that heightened happiness and subjective well-being provides several benefits to people.

Adolescence is defined as the transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. WHO defines an adolescent as anyone between the ages of 10 and 19 years. Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi explains the issues of emotional separation from parents that arise at this crucial stage, which brings a plethora of adjustments upon many adolescents. Adolescence is also marked by an upsurge of sexual feelings, and it is imperative for the adolescent to learn to control their sexual urges. A key aspect of adolescence is emotional instability as a result of the transitional stress rising from the challenges at this stage. Several of these problems present a major peril in the development of adolescents.

As explained in a comparative study by Agarwal and Puri (2017), emotion is a dynamic inner adjustment in the organism that operates for the satisfaction and welfare of the individual. Adolescence causes emotional extremities that may lead to distress and mild-to-moderate forms of maladjustment.

Adjustment refers to the behavioral process of balancing conflicting needs or needs challenged by obstacles in the environment. Adjustment is attained via a mutual relationship between an individual and the environment.

The crux of this study lays emphasis on the changes that adolescence brings about, and seeks to study the implication of the changes in one's happiness and the perception of one's state of well-being. A school environment results in a shift of focus to academic and social achievement. Furthermore, the increased exposure to exploration and experimentation, as a result of peer pressure and lack of a well-developed sense of self, in high school has implications upon the emotional state of the individual and may cause inconsistency in academics as well as day to day life.

When the gratification of the teenager's physiological and physical needs is in congruence with socially acceptable behavioral patterns, then the individual may be well adjusted, which may lead to happiness.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Studies discovered that conditional factors such as gender, marital status, income, etc. are responsible for only 10%-15% of life satisfaction (Diener 1984).

Studies have also shown that increases in real income have no evident implication on life satisfaction. (Easterlin 1995)

Comparative Study between Happiness and Adjustment Levels of Middle School Students and High School Students

Mizelle, Nancy B (1999) conducted a study on how to help middle school students transition into high school with minimum levels of dissonance and optimal level of adjustment.

Happiness has always been viewed as one of the central objectives of an individuals life. (Lyubomirsky 2001)

Research reveals that individuals possessing a materialistic outlook on life have a lower level of happiness. (Kasser & Ahuvia 2002, Richin & Dawson 1992, Belk 1984, Nickerson et al. 2003).

It was revealed by Luhmann, Hawkley, and Cacioppo (2013) that people many a time accredit their happiness to the wrong sources-“source confusion”

A research conducted by Soto (2013) revealed a longitudinal correlation linking the Big Five personality traits and measures of subjective well-being, implicating a connection between the emotions exhibited by particular traits of individuals and their subjective well-being.

A study conducted by Agarwal and Puri (2017) revealed a stark difference between the happiness of boys and girls in school by proving different levels of school adjustment.

Objective:

To study the difference happiness of middle school and high school students.

Hypotheses:

1. The level of happiness among middle school students will be higher than that of high school students.
2. The level of school adjustment among middle school students will be higher than that of high school students.

METHODOLOGY:

Sample:

-For the present study, 30 high-school students and 30 middle-school students were selected from Vasant Valley School of NCR district.

Tools Used:

1. Subjective well-being scale by Ed Diener (1984) measures the level of happiness. The scale presents 5 items each requiring a response on a 7 point scale. Each item requires the respondent to assess their overall satisfaction with their life from different perspectives, hence providing a holistic representation of their satisfaction with their life. The results are cumulated to a 35 point total and are analyzed as given in the scale.

2. Adjustment Inventory for school students (AISS) (1971) constructed by A.K.P.Sinha and R.P.Singh with 60 items equally distributed on Emotional, Social, Educational adjustments was used.

Comparative Study between Happiness and Adjustment Levels of Middle School Students and High School Students

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND RESULTS:

The analysis of data and its interpretation is presented below. The results are shown in the following tables:

Table showing the mean value of happiness and life satisfaction between Middle school and High school students.

T-1

Variable	Level of Schooling	N	Mean	Analysis
Happiness	Middle School	30	32.33333	Extremely satisfied
	High School	30	24.66666	Slightly satisfied

Key for Analysis:

- 31 - 35 Extremely satisfied
- 26 - 30 Satisfied
- 21 - 25 Slightly satisfied
- 20 Neutral
- 15 - 19 Slightly dissatisfied
- 10 - 14 Dissatisfied
- 5 - 9 Extremely dissatisfied

Table showing the mean value of adjustment between Middle school and High school students:

T-2

Variable	Level of Schooling	N	Mean
School Adjustment	Middle School	30	16.33333
	High School	30	13.66666

DISCUSSION:

Across the expanse of one's life, happiness has been deemed to be one of an individual's primary goals. Alongside happiness, the adjustment is also defined as a continual process. Their correlation is that to live a happy life, the adjustment is imperative. This can only be achieved via a congruent relationship between an individual and his or her environment & an individual's self-concept and one's experiences. The aim of the study is to examine the difference in happiness and adjustment of middle school students and high school students.

The table T-1 shows that the obtained mean value of happiness is greater for middle school students than that of high school students. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and effectively proved. It is thus inferred that there is a significant difference between the total happiness levels of middle school and high school students. The conclusions of the current studies disclose that there is a highly evident difference between the levels of happiness and school

Comparative Study between Happiness and Adjustment Levels of Middle School Students and High School Students

adjustment of school students when studied on the grounds of gender, type of family structure and modus operandi of education.

The table T-2 shows that the obtained mean value of school adjustment is greater for middle school students than that of high school students. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and effectively proved. Thus, it is inferred that there is significant invariance between school adjustment of middle school and high school students. This essentially shows that middle school students are better adjusted than high school students.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the present study, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the total happiness and school adjustment levels of middle school and high school students. Middle school students are generally more satisfied with their lives and have a higher level of happiness and school adjustment.

REFERENCES

- Agarwal P, Puri P (2017), A Comparative Study of Adjustment and Happiness between Girls and Boys, *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 4 (2/93), 129-136. DIP:18.01.134/20170402, ISBN:978-1-365-78193-3
- Bedarkar P C (2018). Perceived Economic Adequacy and its Relation with Personality and Mental Health among Late Teenagers. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 6 (2), 23-30. DIP: 18.01.204/20180602, DOI: 10.25215/0602.204
- Bhagat P.,(2016) Comparative Study of Emotional Adjustment of secondary school students in relation to their gender, Academic Achievement and parent child Relationship. *International Journal of Recent Scientific Research*, 7 (7), 12459-12463.
- Knyazev G. G., Slobodskaya H. R., Safronova M. V., & Kinsht I. A. (2002). School adjustment and health in Russian adolescents. *Psychology, Health and Medicine*, 7 (2) 143 – 155.
- Rajput N R (2017). Marital Adjustment and Happiness. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 5(1), 116-123. DIP: 18.01.095/20170501, DOI: 10.25215/0501.095
- Shoda Y, Mischel W, Peake PK. 1990. Predicting Adolescent Cognitive and Self-Regulatory Competencies from Preschool Delay of Gratification: Identifying Diagnostic Conditions. *Developmental Psychology* 26: 978–986.
- Sontakke S (2018). Trait of Hope and Psychological Well-being - A Correlated Study of Pharmacy Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 6 (2), 15-22. DIP: 18.01.203/20180602, DOI: 10.25215/0602.203

Acknowledgments

The researcher is obliged for all students who took part in the research and assisted to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not a conflict of interests

How to cite this article: Juneja, S. S (2018). Comparative Study between Happiness and Adjustment Levels of Middle School Students and High School Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 6(3), 162-166. DIP: 18.01.015/20180603, DOI:10.25215/0603.015