

Relationship of Happiness with: Self-Discrepancy and Perceived Communication

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ABSTRACT

Background: Happiness is the well-being state of the personal which is associated with the difference between their actual self & ideal self (self-discrepancy), and perception to communicate. **Objective:** To study the relationship of happiness with self-discrepancy and perceived communication. **Methods:** A correlational research design was applied, it was implemented on 82 samples belonging to the age range of 15-25. Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) by Lyubomirsky et al.,(1999), Regulatory Focus Questionnaire(RFQ) by Higgins et al.,(2001) and Self-Perceived Communication Competence(SPCC) by McCroskey et al.,(2013) were administered to the samples to measure happiness, self-discrepancy and perceived communication respectively. Additionally, gender differences were also examined among the variables using descriptive analysis. **Result:** The results proposed that there is a significant relationship between happiness & promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and happiness & public, meeting, group, dyad and friends dimensions of perceived communication. Based on the descriptive analysis, both the genders show similar outcome to happiness, self-discrepancy and perceived communication. **Conclusion:** By all counts, with the proven results, happiness is associated with self-discrepancy and perceived communication. **Unique contributions:** This study will help people to understand the need to harmonize their quality of life and, to synchronize with themselves and the society, effectively.

Keywords: Happiness, Self-discrepancy, Perceived communication.

Happiness, also known as subjective well-being (Haybron., 2003)^[1] is an ambivalent term (Delle., 2011). It may be an emotion, experience or a long-term process (Delle., 2011)^[2], while Fredrickson (2001)^[3] included happiness as a nourishing package of positive emotions. According to Diener (2009)^[4], happiness is a subjective phenomenon, each individual decides up on whether he/she is happy or not. This created controversies in measuring happiness, individuals insisted that objective measurement and scientific evaluation is inaccurate. But, as happiness is a real-life phenomenon, it has strong construct validity to evaluate scientifically

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(Diener, 2009)^[4]. According to Sigmund Freud (1930)^[5], people endeavour for happiness and wants to stay happy. He also explained that, the strive for happiness may be positive or negative. Positive aims, to gain lasting feelings of pleasure, whereas negative aims, to avoid displeasure and lack of pain. Happiness is similar to regulatory focus in the phenomenon of averting pain and attaining delight.

The self is a miscellaneous concept, which includes many domains that explain the “self” and its various time-related dimensions (Vartanian., 2012)^[6]. According to James (1948)^[7], there are diverse “self-states” that plays a major role in the lives of individual. This gave rise to the self-discrepancy theory by Higgins (1987)^[8] in which he unfolds that individuals compare their “self-states” (Actual self and Ideal self), and discrepancy exists between them. Duval and Wicklund (1972)^[9] concluded that when discrepancy increases between the “self-states”, it leads to negative emotions and dissatisfaction. This was supported by many other researchers (James et al., (1890)^[7]; Durkheim et al., (1951)^[10]; Fenichel et al., (1945)^[11]; Jacobson et al., (1946)^[12] & Rogers et al., (1961)^[13]). Many studies also suggested that the increased discrepancy is related to guilt and self-criticism (Ausubel et al., (1955)^[14]; Bibring et al., (1953)^[15]; Freud., (1923)^[16] & Freud.,(1961)^[16]; Piers et al., (1971)^[17]; Tompkins et al., (1984)^[18]). Hence it is obvious from all the previous researches that self-discrepancy is related to the emotional state of the individual and impacts their social behaviour (Freud., (1961)^[16]; Scheier et al., (1977)^[19] & Sullivan et al., (1953)^[20]

On the other hand, communication can be explained based on two concepts: one as the mystery of “something” being transferred between minds and the other explains it as a process in which information is shared, received and transmitted between individuals through various means (Lee Thayer., (1983)^[21] and Dester et al., (1970)^[22] explained that communication helps to balance perceptions and beliefs. According to Neuman et al., (1974)^[23], there exists a phenomenon of “spiral of silence” which unfolds that individuals communicate when they perceive their opinions as popular and doesn’t when they find it otherwise. Studies by Lippman (2010)^[24] also revealed that people make communication possible based on the “pictures in their head”, which he termed as Pseudo environment. But the perceptions can sometimes remain firm and may affect the process of communication by greater depths (Bono., 2015)^[25].

High self-discrepancy is related to gain more happiness in order to reduce the gap between their actual self and ideal self (Yu et al., 2016)^[26]. And happiness is highly associated with positive interactions with others, which may help in gaining social knowledge and it may alter the perception of the person (Argyle et al., (1995)^[27] & Schwartz et al., (2012)^[28]).

Therefore, happiness is regarded as the determining factor of life. When individuals find satisfaction between who they really are (actual self) and who they desire to be (ideal self), their level of contentment with themselves and others increases. This leads to better perception of the environment, thus forefront finer communication skills. More or less, these factors impacts the overall Quality of Life (QOL). Hence, this study is aimed to determine the relationship among these concepts to help people understand the necessity of positive emotions to improve their overall Quality of Life. The concept of happiness, self-discrepancy and perceived communication establish the base for the present study.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

1. This study attempts to analyse the relationship between

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2. Happiness and self-discrepancy.
3. Happiness and perceived communication.
4. Self-discrepancy and perceived communication among youths.

Objectives

1. To study the relationship between happiness and self-discrepancy.
2. To investigate the relationship between happiness and perceived communication.
3. To explore the relationship between self-discrepancy and perceived communication.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant relationship between Happiness and Self-discrepancy among youths.
2. There will be no significant relationship between happiness and promotion dimension of self-discrepancy.
3. There will be no significant relationship between happiness and prevention dimension of self-discrepancy.
4. There will be no significant relationship between Happiness and Perceived communication among youths.
5. There will be no significant relationship between Happiness and Public dimension of Perceived Communication
6. There will be no significant relationship between Happiness and Meeting dimension of Perceived Communication
7. There will be no significant relationship between Happiness and Group dimension of Perceived Communication
8. There will be no significant relationship between Happiness and Dyad dimension of Perceived Communication
9. There will be no significant relationship between Happiness and Stranger dimension of Perceived Communication
10. There will be no significant relationship between Happiness and Acquaintance dimension of Perceived Communication
11. There will be no significant relationship between Happiness and Friends dimension of Perceived Communication
12. There will be no significant relationship between Self-Discrepancy and Perceived communication among youths.
13. There will be no significant relationship between Promotion dimension of Self-discrepancy and Public dimension of Perceived communication
14. There will be no significant relationship between Promotion dimension of Self-discrepancy and Meeting dimension of Perceived communication.
15. There will be no significant relationship between Promotion dimension of Self-discrepancy and Group dimension of Perceived communication
16. There will be no significant relationship between Promotion dimension of Self-discrepancy and Dyad dimension of Perceived communication
17. There will be no significant relationship between Promotion dimension of Self-discrepancy and Stranger dimension of Perceived communication
18. There will be no significant relationship between Promotion dimension of Self-discrepancy and Acquaintance dimension of Perceived communication
19. There will be no significant relationship between Promotion dimension of Self-discrepancy and Friends dimension of Perceived communication
20. There will be no significant relationship between Prevention dimension of Self-discrepancy and Public dimension of Perceived communication

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21. There will be no significant relationship between Prevention dimension of Self-discrepancy and Meeting dimension of Perceived communication
22. There will be no significant relationship between Prevention dimension of Self-discrepancy and Group dimension of Perceived communication
23. There will be no significant relationship between Prevention dimension of Self-discrepancy and Dyad dimension of Perceived communication
24. There will be no significant relationship between Prevention dimension of Self-discrepancy and stranger dimension of Perceived communication.
25. There will be no significant relationship between Prevention dimension of Self-discrepancy and Acquaintance dimension of Perceived communication.
26. There will be no significant relationship between Prevention dimension of Self-discrepancy and Friends dimension of Perceived communication

Sample

Convenient sampling method had been used to collect data from eighty-two youths (39 men and 43 women) who are pursuing their studies in various professional and non-professional courses. The age range of the sample was 15-25 (Mean age= 20.94). The demographic variables included were: age, gender and the type of course pursued; professional and non-professional.

Tools Used

The following instruments were used in the paper:

SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS SCALE (SHS)

The scale comprises of 4-items, which was scored on a 7-point Likert scale (not much to very much). The scale was formulated to measure the global subjective happiness. The SHS questionnaire has 2 dimensions:

1. Two questions enquire about the individuals' comparative happiness relative to that of their peers.
2. Two questions enquire about the individuals' comparative happiness to the description of a happy and unhappy individual.

This scale was structured by Sonja Lyubomirsky (1999) and the reliability score is .86

SELF-PERCEIVED COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE SCALE (SPCC)

The Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (SPCC) consists of 12-items scored by providing percentage of competence. It comprises of 7 dimensions: Public, Meeting, Group, Dyad, Stranger, Acquaintance and Friends. This scale was formulated to measure the perceived communication competence by McCroskey (2013). The reliability of the scale estimates above .85

REGULATORY FOCUS QUESTIONNAIRE (RFQ)

The Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ) is an 11-item questionnaire with two dimensions: Promotion and Prevention. Promotion focuses on gains and accomplishments, whereas prevention emphasizes safety and losses.

Items 1,3,7,9,10,11 belongs to promotion dimension and items 2,4,5,6,8 belongs to prevention dimension.

This scale was developed by Higgins et al., (2001) and scored on a 5-point Likert scale. The reliability was .73 for the promotion dimension and .80 for prevention dimension.

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Procedure

The questionnaire on Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) followed by Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ) and Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (SPCC) were administered to the sample of youth. The responses were collected, coded and interpreted. Descriptive analysis was done to study the relationship of happiness with self-discrepancy and perceived communication. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was used to find the relationship among the chosen variables. Gender difference was also examined.

RESULTS

Table 1 Relationship between Subjective Happiness and Self-Discrepancy

	Promotion	Prevention
Subjective Happiness	.257*	.948 ^{NS}

* Significant at .05 level NS- Not Significant

Correlation between Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and subjective happiness ($r = .26$, $n=82$, $p < .05$), Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and subjective happiness ($r = .95$, $n=82$, $p < .05$). As displayed in table 1, there is no significant relationship between Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and subjective happiness. But there is a significant relationship between Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and subjective happiness. Hence, Hypothesis 1.1 is rejected and 1.2 is accepted.

Table 2 Relationship between Subjective Happiness and Perceived Communication

	SHS	P	M	G	D	S	A	F
SHS	1							
P	0.20	1						
M	0.22*	0.61**	1					
G	0.24*	0.57**	0.96**	1				
D	0.29*	0.45**	0.46*	0.41**	1			
S	0.11	0.66**	0.79**	0.75**	0.54**	1		
A	0.13	0.67**	0.75**	0.71**	0.60**	0.63**	1	
F	0.37*	0.59**	0.36**	0.33**	0.50**	0.25*	0.32**	1

SHS- Subjective Happiness Scale, P- Public, M- Meeting, G- Group, D- Dyad, S- Stranger, A- Acquaintance, F- Friends

* Significant at .05 level, ** Significant at .01 level

Correlation between Subjective happiness and public dimension of perceived communication ($r = .20$, $n=82$, $p > .05$), subjective happiness and meeting dimension of perceived communication ($r = .22$, $n=82$, $p < .05$), subjective happiness and group dimension of perceived communication ($r = .24$, $n=82$, $p < .05$), subjective happiness and dyad dimension of perceived communication ($r = .29$, $n=82$, $p < .05$), subjective happiness and stranger dimension of perceived communication ($r = .11$, $n=82$, $p > .05$), subjective happiness and acquaintance dimension of perceived communication ($r = .13$, $n=82$, $p > .05$) & subjective happiness and friends dimension of perceived communication ($r = .37$, $n=82$, $p < .05$)

Table 2 indicates that there's no significant relationship between subjective happiness and public, stranger and acquaintance dimensions of perceived communication. But there was a significant relationship between subjective happiness and meeting, group, dyad and friends' dimension of perceived communication.

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Hence, hypotheses 2.1, 2.5 & 2.6 were accepted and hypotheses 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 & 2.7 was rejected.

Table 3 Relationship between Promotion dimension of Self-discrepancy and perceived communication

	Promotion	P	M	G	D	S	A	F
Promotion	1							
P	0.21 ^{NS}	1						
M	0.25*	0.61**	1					
G	0.15 ^{NS}	0.57**	0.96**	1				
D	0.30*	0.45**	0.46**	0.41**	1			
S	0.29*	0.66**	0.79**	0.75**	0.54**	1		
A	0.20 ^{NS}	0.67**	0.75**	0.71**	0.60**	0.63	1	
F	0.19 ^{NS}	0.58**	0.36**	0.33*	0.50**	0.25*	0.32*	1

P- Public, M- Meeting, G- Group, D- Dyad, S- Stranger, A- Acquaintance, F- Friends

* Significant at .05 level, ** Significant at .01 level.

Correlation between Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and Public dimension of perceived communication ($r = .21$, $n = 82$, $p > .05$), Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and Meeting dimension of perceived communication ($r = .25$, $n = 82$, $p < .05$), Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and Group dimension of perceived communication ($r = .15$, $n = 82$, $p > .05$), Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and Dyad dimension of perceived communication ($r = .30$, $n = 82$, $p < .05$), Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and Stranger dimension of perceived communication ($r = .29$, $n = 82$, $p < .05$), Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and Acquaintance dimension of perceived communication ($r = .20$, $n = 82$, $p > .05$), Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and friends dimension of perceived communication ($r = .19$, $n = 82$, $p > .05$). As displayed in table 3, there is no significant relationship between Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and Public, Group, Acquaintance & Friends dimension of perceived communication. But significant relationship was found to be among Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and Meeting, Dyad & Stranger dimensions of perceived communication.

Hence, Hypotheses 3.1, 3.3, 3.6 and 3.7 are accepted and 3.2, 3.4 and 2.5 are rejected.

Table 4 Relationship between Prevention dimension of Self-discrepancy and perceived communication

	Prevention	P	M	G	D	S	A	F
Prevention	1							
P	-0.17 ^{NS}	1						
M	-0.17 ^{NS}	0.61**	1					
G	-0.16 ^{NS}	0.57**	0.96**	1				
D	-0.11 ^{NS}	0.45**	0.46**	0.41**	1			
S	-0.24*	0.66**	0.79**	0.75**	0.54**	1		
A	-0.01 ^{NS}	0.67**	0.75**	0.71**	0.60**	0.63	1	
F	-0.27*	0.58**	0.36**	0.33*	0.50**	0.25*	0.32*	1

P- Public, M- Meeting, G- Group, D- Dyad, S- Stranger, A- Acquaintance, F- Friends

* Significant at .05 Level, ** Significant at .01 level

Correlation between Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and Public dimension of perceived communication ($r = -.17$, $n = 82$, $p > .05$), Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy

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and Meeting dimension of perceived communication ($r = -.17$, $n=82$, $p > .05$), Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and Group dimension of perceived communication ($r = -.16$, $n=82$, $p > .05$), Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and Dyad dimension of perceived communication ($r = -.11$, $n=82$, $p > .05$), Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and Stranger dimension of perceived communication ($r = -.24$, $n=82$, $p < .05$), Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and Acquaintance dimension of perceived communication ($r = -.01$, $n=82$, $p > .05$), Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and friends dimension of perceived communication ($r = -.27$, $n=82$, $p < .05$). As displayed in table 4, there is no significant relationship between Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and Public, Meeting, Group, Dyad & Acquaintance dimension of perceived communication. But there is a significant relationship between Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and Stranger & Friend dimensions of perceived communication.

Hence hypotheses 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11 and 3.13 are accepted & 3.12 and 3.14 are rejected.

DISCUSSION

Happiness and self-discrepancy

The results implied that the desire to attain the ideal self (promotion dimension of self-discrepancy) by accomplishing some goals, promotes happiness. Self-discrepancy narrows by reducing the differences between the “self-states”. A past research by Hardin (2007)^[29] also suggested that, lower self-discrepancy leads to higher positive emotions, such as happiness. Many other researchers have explained that self-discrepancy is associated with emotional affect (James (1890/1948)^[7]., Duval and Wicklund, (1972)^[9]., Durkheim ,(1951)^[10]., Fenichel, (1945)^[11]., Jacobson, (1946)^[12]., Rogers, (1961)^[13]., Cooley (1902/1964)^[30].,).

Happiness and perceived communication

The study revealed that the perception of interactions with known-people or people with something in common (Meeting, Group, Dyad and Friends) is related to happiness. But happiness leads to bias in the processing of information thus altering the perception of the individual (Schwartz, 1991)^[31]. In his research, Wilson (2008)^[32] mentioned that interacting with others increases the level of happiness. On the other hand, Morke (1999)^[33] revealed that happiness improves the interpersonal communications and brings about positive effects. Vlahovic (2012)^[34], explained that relationship is benefitted by happy social interactions.

Self-discrepancy and perceived communication

The results provide insight to the concept of self-discrepancy and its impact on effective communication. According to Cooley (1922)^[35], understanding the self is influenced by the communication with others. A study by Rosenthal (1968)^[36], suggested that communication provides motivation and help promote the self, thus reducing the discrepancy. Feedbacks and interaction with others has shown to selectively chosen to protect their “self” from getting affected, thereby decreasing the gap between their ought-self and ideal-self (Olson, (1979)^[37]., Wicklund, (1975)^[38].,).

CONCLUSION

The study contributes to how happiness is related to self-discrepancy and perceived communication. The findings suggest that happiness is related to promotion aspects of self-discrepancy and, also related to Meeting, Group, Dyad & Friends’ dimensions of perceived communication. It also unfolds the relationship between Promotion dimension of self-discrepancy and Meeting, Dyad & Stranger dimensions of perceived communication. The

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results also conclude relationship between Prevention dimension of self-discrepancy and Stranger & Friend dimensions of perceived communication.

Implications

1. The findings of this study have the following implications:
2. Importance of happiness to understand one's different "self-states".
3. Effect of happiness on different communication dimensions.
4. Understanding the role of "self-states" and its impact on perception of communication.
5. Role of self-satisfaction to improve interaction/relationship with others.
6. Contribution to the field of positive psychology based on the improvement of a study related to happiness.

Limitations

1. Sample size was restricted to a small group.
2. The limits of the geographical location of the samples.
3. Only relationship analyses had been carried out, other comparative analysis has not been evaluated.

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Conflict of Interest

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