

The role of Social Intelligence on happiness among millennials

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ABSTRACT

A different world, a different worldview. Millennials have grown up in a time of rapid change, giving them a set of priorities and expectations sharply different from previous generations. (Goldman Sachs, 2020). The millennial generation, also known as the echo boom, is generally defined as the population cohort born between 1981 to 1997 (Frey, 2018). The aim of the study is to determine the role of social intelligence and happiness among millennials. Social intelligence is defined as the ability to understand other people and how they will react to different social situations (Silvera, 2001). Lyubomirsky (2013) defines happiness as the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile. The sample for this research consisted of 145 millennials. Random sampling method was used. The scales employed are Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and Tromso Social Intelligence Scale. Correlational tests, t-tests and regression analysis were performed for analysing data. The results of the study showed that social intelligence is a significant predictor of happiness. Moreover, there was no gender differences in the level of happiness and social intelligence among millennials.

Keywords: *Social Intelligence, Happiness, Millennials*

The millennial generation, a generation marked as self-entitled; having to grow up surrounded by social media and still seek happiness on a day to day basis (Park et al., 2014). It is becoming more prominent in the media, with articles explaining how they are the 'self-entitled generation', generation Y, the needy and high maintenance generation of our time (Geraci & Nagy, 2004). Happiness is primarily a subjective phenomenon "for which the final judge is who-ever lives inside a person's skin" (Myers, 1995, p. 11).

Social intelligence

In today's world, to survive we need human connections or relations. Without these relations one cannot survive independently. To get along and to engage with others is the skill that one need, that is the social intelligence. It is very important because it gives us awareness,

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knowledge, interactions to get along in the society and to have mutual connections in the social environment.

Research on social intelligence started only a few years after Spearman (1904) introduced academic intelligence (Thorndike, 1920). Thus, social intelligence was one of the first candidates for a new intelligence construct to complement traditional human ability concepts. Weis, Susanne. (2008).

The positive interaction of a person with others leads to a pivotal role in his success or failure in occupational and social life, since he lives in an interlocked environment of relation, and the social intelligent behaviour is characterized with its interest in people, practicing accepted behaviour from society, and retaining with good relationships with others, so the success of an individual does not only depend on cognitive intelligence but also on social intelligence. (Khalidi, 2009).

As early as 1920, Thorndike formulated social intelligence as distinct from other human intelligence, such as abstract and mechanical. He defined social intelligence as "The ability to understand men and women, boys and girls to act wisely in human relation". It emphasizes three main elements which are: capacity of social towards society; social knowledge and individual's capacity for social adjustments. The construct of social intelligence began to indicate a person's ability to understand and act with wisdom and effectiveness in interpersonal tasks (Thorndike, 1920).

Weis & Sub (2008) proposed a cognitive model of social intelligence. It has five domains - social understanding, social memory, social perception, social creativity, social knowledge. In social understanding, a given social situations one can interpret other people's feelings and thoughts to fit in the social environment. Social memory is to recall the past events that happened in the social situations. Social perceptions is an ability to quickly remember the social events and information. Fourth one is that social creativity is to give solutions to the social problems or situations. Finally, social knowledge is to know about the social world that include rules, regulations and information that matters in the society.

Happiness

The ancients believed happiness was not achieved, but either God-given or due to chance. If happiness was experienced, it was not a function of the individual but rather was generously bestowed upon them by the cosmos. At some point in time happiness did change from a divine gift to a self-evident truth. Enlightenment thinkers believed that happiness could be attained in this life (Lopez, 2009).

The surest route to happiness is quality social relationships. With many today feeling overwhelmed and living through "just in time" schedules where every second is accounted for, resources are scant. If people aim to become happier as effectively and efficiently as possible, then people should put energy into family, friends, romantic partners, and colleagues. Researchers including Michael Argyle, Diener, Lyubomirsky, Seligman, and David Myers assert that social relationships may be the "greatest single cause" of happiness (Lopez, 2009).

Happiness is a positive concept that is important for health (Gavin & Mason, 2004). It is important for both physical and mental health. It gives us meaning throughout the life. The term "happiness" consists of several mental concepts such as happiness, pleasure and

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enjoyment, but it does not mean baseless optimism and self-deception, denial of realities, and not considering the problems of self or others (Diener et al., 2002).

For many years, theorists have tried to define the word “happiness”. This has been found to be very difficult because the emotion is completely subjective (Seligman, 2002). In 320 BC Aristotle stated that a person's view of happiness is supported by popular beliefs, meaning that we only view happiness as an emotion because we have been told it is one (Aristotle, 1976).

Social intelligence and happiness

Social intelligence is an aggregated measure of self and social awareness, evolved social beliefs and attitudes, a capacity and appetite to manage complex social change (Honeywill, 2014). The concept of social intelligence refers to the ability to understand thoughts, feelings and behaviours of the others in different social situations, it also consisted of the skills which enable individuals to solve social problems (Abuhashim, 2008).

According to Goleman's (2006) model of social intelligence, there are two sub-dimensions of social intelligence namely social awareness and social facility; that is, what we sense about others and how we use it respectively. Social awareness includes primal empathy, attunement, empathic accuracy and social cognition. Briefly, primal empathy describes someone's ability to sense nonverbal signals and to feel for others. Attunement relates to listening and attuning completely with others. Empathic accuracy concerns understanding of other's feelings, intentions and thoughts. Social cognition concerns what someone knows about the mechanism of the social world. The second sub-dimension of social intelligence is social facility, which can further be divided into synchrony, self-presentation, influence and concern. Social facility refers to what is naturally carried on from social awareness. Social facility refers to someone's sense and knowledge of others so as to develop smooth and effective interactions. Synchrony concerns smooth interactions on a nonverbal level. Self-presentation refers to the effective presentation of self. Influence involves the ability to shape the outcome of social interactions. Concern is related to recognizing the needs of others, caring about their needs and taking appropriate actions to affect this care. Goleman explained that the high road abilities concerning social cognition and the low road functions concerning nonverbal abilities are mixed together in this model of social intelligence.

Individuals with high social intelligence, can able to solve problems and understand other thoughts feelings and behaviours of others in the social environment which gives them happiness and can build human relations and able to fit in the society.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hooda (2009) examined the relationship between Positive Psychological health and Social intelligence. The sample comprised of 300 working adults (male = 170 and female = 130). Positive health was assessed by (a) 29-item Oxford Happiness Scale, (b) Satisfaction with Life Scale and (c) Life Orientation test-revised. The results revealed that there is significant correlation between the two components of Positive Psychological Health i.e. satisfaction with life and happiness, and six factors of Social intelligence (Cooperativeness, Confidence, Sensitivity, tactfulness Sense of humour, and memory).

A study conducted by Aminpoor (2013) examined the relationship between social intelligence and happiness in Payame Noor University students. A sample of 226 students (96 male and 130 female) were selected randomly. Social Intelligence Questionnaire (SIQ) and

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Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) were used for the study. The results of the study showed that there is a positive significant relationship between social intelligence and happiness.

A study conducted by Dogan (2013) examined the role of social intelligence in happiness among Osmangazi University students of turkey. The sample comprised of 249 university students. The Turkish Version of the Tromsø Social Intelligence Scale (TSIS-TR) and The Turkish Version of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire Short-Form (OHQ-SF) have been used. The results revealed that social intelligence is positively related to happiness in University students. Social intelligence explains 16% of the variance in happiness. So, social intelligence is an important factor for the happiness of university students.

A study conducted by Sangeeta (2014) examined the relationship between happiness and social intelligence among adolescents' students with and without disabilities. The sample comprised of 180 adolescents with the age group of 12 to 17 years. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and Tromso Social Intelligence Scale (TSIS) were used. The results revealed that there is significant relationship between happiness and social intelligence.

Bottrell. C. (2017) examines the millennials' lived experience of happiness from their own perspective. Using photo elicitation and disposable cameras and semi-structured interviews, an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was conducted to explore the lived experiences of happiness in a millennial generation. The homogenous sample of four used are aged between 18-24, as the latest and last group in the millennial generation. The findings from the study suggest that there is a need for escape in order to feel happiness in a fast paced and technologically driven society among millennials.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Random sampling method was done to obtain the responses. A total of 145 responses were collected among the millennial generation, also known as the echo boom, generally defined as the population cohort born between 1981 to 1997 (Frey, 2018). The age of the participants ranged from 23 to 39 years. The sample consisted of 67 (46.2%) males and 78 (53.8%) females with a mean age of 28.4 years and standard deviation of 5.1 years.

Design

Quantitative research design was adopted for the study to determine the role of social intelligence on happiness among millennials.

Measures

Tromso social intelligence scale (Silvera, 2001) – TSIS is a 21 item, self-report style scale developed by Silvera (2001). The scale is composed of three dimensions. The internal consistency coefficients of TSIS have been reported to be .81, .86 and .79 respectively for the subscales of Social Information Processing (SP), Social Skills (SS) and Social Awareness (SA). Higher scores indicate higher social intelligence

Oxford happiness questionnaire (Argyle & Hills, 2002) – OHQ is a 29 item, self-report measure developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University. It was devised as a broad measure of personal happiness. The correlation coefficient of the test-retest scores, for measuring reliability, was 0.78. Content validity was estimated.

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Procedure

The data was collected through distribution of questionnaires and online survey. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they were asked to fill the questionnaires. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The questionnaires were presented in English to all participants. This was considered an adequate procedure as all participants were fluent in English. It took approximately 10 minutes to complete the full set of questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The data from the survey was entered into the IBM Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 26.0, and analysed using descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, correlation analysis and regression analysis. Descriptive statistics was employed to describe the sample both demographically as well as in regard to their level of happiness. Independent sample t-test was used to analyse the difference among groups defined by gender. Correlational analysis was used to examine the relationship between social intelligence & its subscales and happiness. Linear regression analysis was done to determine the role of social intelligence on happiness. Multiple regression analysis was done to determine the role of the subscales of social intelligence on happiness.

RESULTS

Table 1: The percentage of level of happiness among millennials

Level of Happiness	Percentage (%)
Somewhat unhappy	2.1
Not particularly happy or unhappy	41.4
Moderately happy	9.0
Pretty happy	40.7
Very happy	6.9

Table 1 shows the percentage of level of happiness among the participants. Results indicate that none of the participants fall under the category 'not happy' or 'too happy' and approximately 42% of the participants are not particularly happy or unhappy.

Table 2: Gender differences on Happiness and Social Intelligence among Millennials

Variable		n	Mean	SD	t	df	P
Happiness	Male	67	4.06	.65	.146	118.46	.884
	Female	78	4.05	.47			
Social Intelligence	Male	67	68.57	9.19	.510	143	.611
	Female	78	67.86	7.53			

Table 2 represents the gender differences on happiness and social intelligence among the participants. Results indicate that there was no significant difference between male and female in happiness and social intelligence.

Table 3: The relationship between Happiness and Social Intelligence among Millennials

Measures	1	2
Happiness	-	.289**
Social Intelligence	.289**	-

**p< .01 (2-tailed)

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predictor of happiness and social information processing and social awareness subscale of social intelligence are not a significant predictor of happiness.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of happiness among millennials. The findings of the study suggests that approximately 42% of the participants are neither happy nor unhappy. And, approximately 57% of the participants are happy in an average or above the average level.

The beginning of widespread use of information technology following globalization in India during the 1990s coincides with the early years of millennials. They are “digital natives” and almost always connected to the Internet through computers, cell phones, and online social networks. Technology has provided them with a platform from which they can explore new avenues of education, entrepreneurship, innovation, wealth creation, and work-life integration. They can achieve anything that promotes their self-esteem (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). This “great generation” is more educated, more cheerful, more authentic, more cooperative (Howe & Strauss, 2000), and more optimistic than other generations. They maintain relationships, value commitment and a supportive work environment (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010), and prefer clearly defined responsibilities (Graduate Management Admission Council, 2007). Therefore, millennials experience an adequate amount of happiness.

Based on the findings, there was no difference between male and female on the level of happiness and social intelligence. The influence of gender roles is different due to the individual norms, traditions, and values. Gender biases are decreasing in the millennial generation nowadays, in comparison with the previous generations. Many laws governing this issue have been passed, so that people maintain gender equality in professional settings. Large scale surveys find that women and men report approximately the same level of happiness. Even studies that do report gender differences also report that the differences are small in magnitude (Baumgardner, 2015).

Another purpose of the study was to determine the role of social intelligence on happiness. Millennials have higher need for social affiliation and are highly socialized (Hart, 2006). They tend to have meaningful interactions and spend less time alone. Findings also suggest that there is a strong positive correlation between happiness and social intelligence. This finding is supported by numerous researches (Dogan, 2013; Aminpoor, 2013; Sangeetha, 2014). The participants’ ability to understand other people and how they will react to different social situations tend to satisfy their belonging needs and induce happiness.

The subscales of social intelligence namely social information processing and social skills have a significant relationship with happiness. The subscale social awareness has no significant relationship with happiness. Social information processing is the ability to understand and to predict other’s behaviour. Social skills focuses on behavioural aspects such as entering new situations and social compatibility (Kordnoghi, 2016). Therefore, being aware of the social events is not sufficient to contribute to one’s happiness. The ability to understand others, being empathetic, predicting other’s behaviour and one’s behavioural aspects contribute to happiness.

Findings from the regression analysis has shown that social intelligence is a significant predictor of happiness among millennials. People with high social intelligence exhibit good conversational skills, knowledge on social roles, effective listening skills, social self-efficacy,

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conflict resolution skills and appropriate social behaviour. Such skills aid to their belonging needs through satisfying social relationships and hence leading to happiness. This is also supported by the Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory.

Based on the findings from the multiple linear regression analysis, the social skills subscale of social intelligence is a significant predictor of happiness. And, the social information processing and social awareness subscales are not a significant predictor of happiness. Social skills helps people develop social competence, good relationship with others which provides a support network, promotes empathy. Social skills training is also provided in therapeutic practices. Rather than knowledge on social cues or the ability to understand and predict other's behaviour, acting upon it with effective social skills is a predictor of happiness.

CONCLUSION

One's life is directly or indirectly influenced by social intelligence. Leading a successful life in a society without social intelligence is difficult. Social intelligence helps an individual develop a healthy co-existence with other people. Socially intelligent people behave tactfully and prosper in life. Social intelligence is useful in solving the problems of social life and helps in tackling various social tasks. Thus, social intelligence is an important developmental aspect (Saxena & Jain, 2013).

Garaigordobil (2015) reported that happiness plays an important role in physical and mental health. Intervention programs that promote social intelligence leading to happiness can play a relevant role in the reduction of psychological symptoms and behavioural problems. The limitations of the study include relatively small sample size, the questionnaires were self-reporting measures, so there could be social desirability bias among the participants.

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Conflict of Interest

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