Research Paper

Enhancing Happiness through Technology in School Students

Ms. Kirti Pandey[1]*, Dr. Rashmi Choudhuri[2]

ABSTRACT

Happiness has been considered as the final goal for human-beings and everyone strives for it. Technology has become part of daily life and it is related to happiness. This offers various platforms and tools of socialization so that people can share their ideas globally, connect with their friends and overcome loneliness. Excessive and indiscriminate use of technology has negative impacts on school students such as that of aggressiveness, hostile behavior, isolation and addiction. We must intervene to minimize abuse of technology. Advantages and disadvantages of technology use in school are discussed. This paper also focuses on how controlled use of technology can facilitate Indian strategies helpful in enhancing happiness among school students.

Happiness is considered as the ultimate motive of all human endeavors. William James once remarked that it is the 'secret motive' of all that people do and are willing to endure (Kamman, Farry & Herbison, 1984). In Indian tradition, there are two terms used for 'happiness'. *Sukh*a belongs to a set of concepts where dualities exist i.e., *dukha* (pain) sorrow, suffering stands in contrast to *sukha* (pleasure). The source of happiness in Indian culture is both extrinsic i.e., *sukha* or ordinary happiness and intrinsic i.e., *Anand* or ultimate happiness (Banavathy & Choudry, 2014). Spiritual happiness (*anand)* lies deep within us, in the very core of our being. Happiness does not exist in external objects, but only in us, who are the consciousness that experiences happiness (salagame 2002). To attain happiness, we must look inward instead of being dependent upon external objects or experience.

Advances in technology have made life easier, safer and more pleasurable and comfortable to a degree that could not have been imagined by previous generations. But the deeper hope that this would lead to greater happiness remains largely unfulfilled. In very recent years, various worldwide surveys on happiness show that better economic and social levels have improved human well-being considerably, but the average level of life satisfaction or happiness is largely stable (Agarwal, 2017). Technological advancements have emphasized our belief that comfort, materialistic growth and financial growth make up happy which tend to increase pleasure – seeking behavior and avoidance of pain. Technology has improved

---

[1]Research scholar, Faculty of Education, BHU
[2]Professor, Faculty of Education, BHU
*Corresponding Author

living conditions of people but the idea of the Easterlin Paradox clearly indicates that at a certain point of time, happiness is directly proportional to income both among and within nations but after a specific point of time, happiness doesn't increase when a country's income increases. Life driven by technology may lead to a sense of happiness since it gratifies the physical needs that lead to comfortable and positive feelings which are not permanent or everlasting. For example – initial use of a laptop or Smartphone may cause euphoria and joy in the beginning but after a reasonable time, this happiness disappears. As individuals tend to adapt very effortlessly to advantages brought by technology and this adaptation doesn't ensure happiness in the long run. External objects, situations, other people may induce or may not induce happiness within individuals. Happiness in Indian culture has to be experienced from within. According to the Indian perspective, technology cannot be a source of happiness but it can only facilitate or stimulate happiness among school students. In the west, Technology may be a huge source of happiness, but it's crucial to understand how to use it sparingly (Mochan, 2018).

Advantages of technology
Technology can also facilitate happiness by making our lives easier and simpler as booking online train tickets or making online payments. There are some other benefits that has been discussed below:

1. **Enrich social relationship:** Communication tools like social media, internet and mobile phones have been used for developing social relationships. During lockdown, when there was restriction on crowd gathering, then technology has been used for connecting own family members, friends and relatives. Technology helps in developing more social relationships and greater networks which provides support for sharing and caring for others. The feeling of being connected and communicated at any time of day makes individuals feel pleasant and content.

2. **Sense of acquiring own potentials:** Technology allows people to advance in their lives and make them able to self-actualize (Mochan, 2018). It supports people in accomplishment of their own ambitions and objectives. For example, students can enhance their innate skills such as painting, singing, and photography with the use of various technologies and become more creative. Students can gather ideas from the internet and use those ideas in a more creative way. This will create a positive feeling of purpose and accomplishment.

3. **Improved living Conditions:** Advancement in technology has increased comfort and improved living conditions for individuals. New technologies have made people live better and happier. For example, electricity and electronics are not only providing comfort but saving our time too. Technology has improved ease of mobility. Modern technology in school can help in learning dull subjects in a more interactive way. It can help in the active participation of students in the classroom. From western notion of happiness, meaningful engagement leads to happiness.

4. **Instant access to information:** Technology provides access to an unlimited amount of current information and data from a variety of sources like e-library, internet, you-tube videos etc. Technology allows 24/7 access to educational resources. With the introduction of technology in education, resources have become more accessible which results in a decreased tuition fee. E-books have made things easier for low-income families as well as indirectly contributing to the reduction in deforestation, which is one of the major environmental problems.

Technology has overcome the limitation of place and space and make individuals more globalized.

Disadvantages of technology

Technology in school makes the learning environment more joyful and enjoyable. Technology is a neutral tool to be wielded either for good or evil (Heidegger, 1977) cited in Mochan,2018. Excessive and indiscriminate use of technology has a negative effect on school students resulting in diminished happiness because they are more vulnerable due to their young age. The cons of technology on happiness are discussed in terms of following factors:

1. **Reduced hippocampus in brain:** Researchers have shown that technology may result in changing the physical structure of the brain. Adoption of GPS in smartphones reduces our spatial ability resulting in reduced size of hippocampus. Hippocampus is responsible for memory formation, learning and happiness. (Wadhawa & Palvia, 2018).

2. **Reduced Sleep:** A growing body of research shows that sleep has been disrupted by screen exposure. Most Computers and Smartphones emit intense blue light which impairs production of melatonin. Changes in melatonin level decreases sleep quality because melatonin is an essential chemical produced in our body for sound sleep. Increased Smartphone use is associated with shorter sleep duration and less efficient sleep (Christensen, Bettencourt, Kaye et al., 2016).

3. **Technology addiction:** According to Griffiths (1996), there are four types of technology addiction: television addiction, computer addiction (internet usage, programming or piracy), computer game addiction and virtual reality addiction. Increased dependency over technology is keeping school students away from direct experiences of life. Addiction to technology reduces a sense of peacefulness, security stillness and ease. Students in the classroom find difficulty in paying attention or even sitting still. There are several adverse physical, social, psychological repercussions of technology addiction. Eye burning, neck pain, changes in posture, and numbness in certain body parts are few instances of these physical repercussions. Poor academic accomplishment, problems with one's personal life, family, and school as well as lack of time management, communications difficulties, lack of confidence and difficulty in expressing oneself, are all massive psychological repercussions (Grusser and Thalemann, 2006) cited in Karadag, 2019.

4. **Lack of Empathy & Narcissism:** Spending more time on social media enables unhealthy comparisons with seemingly perfect lives of those who are just constantly flaunting only the best aspects of their life. Students must restrain themselves from unrealistic and unnecessary comparisons with others. Today's adolescents are less happy than adolescents of earlier generation and there has been increase in suicidal rate of teenagers (Hampton, Lauren, Goulet et. al, 2009). It has been found that technology exposure has declined empathy.

5. **Poor reading, writing and arithmetic skills (3r's):** Overdependence on technology makes students bereft of legible writing, neat writing and poor pronunciation. Reading books has been associated with numerous positive human outcomes in education and in life. In research even, it has been found that people remember and learn more from offline reading than from reading on electronic devices (Richtel Matt, 2011). Technology has reduced basic computing ability as we become more dependent on calculators for simple calculations also. Compromised in the development of cognitive domain, in the long run will affect the student's performance and achievement. Poor performance of students can cause frustration and a sense of lack which will ultimately affect the happiness level.

6. **Communication gap with family members:** The Internet isolates adolescents from the real world. In real life, the internet has reduced and disrupted social relationships.

In the same house, family members are sending text messages to each other instead of speaking. Lack of communication within family members has been interlinked with excessive use of the internet. It also reduces the diameter of the social circle which increases depression and loneliness among school students.

Strategies for enhancing happiness among school students

School students can practice self-cultivation and compassion related activities such as altruism, meditation as ways to attain happiness. UNESCO mandates and frameworks such as The Incheon Declaration (2015) and Commission on Global citizenship Education (2012), among others, have all emphasized happiness as the primary purpose of human existence. Education should play a role to cultivate competencies and skills among individuals for promoting a happier society (UNESCO, Bangkok). Recently in India, Delhi Government schools have introduced a Happiness curriculum to instill values & morals which will contribute in meaningful ways towards development of self and the society (SCERT & DOE, 2018) cited in Narula, 2018. Park (2003) suggested that interventions to increase happiness should be initiated early in childhood as ongoing development offers much flexibility to build a strong foundation based on virtues of happiness (Mc cabe et al., 2011). Kriyananada, 2006 has suggested that schools must inculcate values or virtues which are essential for leading lives. Apart from developing academic skills, school must nurture specific values such as kindness, sense of cooperation and good will, which will induce a 'state of inner equilibrium'. This will ultimately develop mature individuals who are more proficient at dealing with negative emotions both within and out.

There are some strategies that can be implemented at school level for increasing ordinary levels of happiness and provide a direction for attainment of high level happiness.

Training of senses and development of aesthetic sense:

There are the electronic-games (e-games) which can be considered as an application of technology in the field of games. An electronic game can be defined as a game that employs electronic devices to create an interactive system with which a player can play.The popularity of e-games whether online or offline has been increasing day by day by leaps and bounds. Technology has remarkable physiological and psychological effects on children and adolescents (Chakrawarty and Choudhuri, 2016). Students pay constant attention to the game and are completely immersed in electronic game. The e-games have become so engrossing that students sit still for long periods of time. Day by day e-games are characterized by enhanced realism in graphics and sound, combined with even more extreme violent action, like showing excessive amounts of blood, gory acts involving shooting, killing, and blasting. Violent games stimulate aggressiveness among students. Games can never be harmful if wisely selected. Parents and teachers should monitor students' game choice. We have to stop the use of technology mediated games which arouse aggressiveness. Technology can be used in a much better way to inculcate aesthetic sense for gratification of sensual pleasure such as listening to classical & folk music which generates a soothing sense, watching or performing classical dance and engagement in fine arts activities etc. Teachers can improve students' sense of aesthetics. It is not always possible to experience live rhythmic music but it can be experienced with the help of headphones, music system for a shorter duration. Technology causing noise pollution and loud music should be abstained by school students. students must develop aesthetic sense not only in music but in all sensory pleasure experiences. Proper training of senses promotes gratification of sensual pleasure which is ordinary level of happiness.

Pleasure of natural events through technology:

Experience of pleasantness with experience of natural beauty includes watching sunrise or sunset, a good breeze, gazing at the moon, listening to the chirping of birds etc. This is related to natural phenomena. Science is also about natural events. Teachers can adopt animated videos for approaching science for making students feel about natural events. It is not possible to wait for the occurrence of natural events such as growing of plants, nest making etc. So, technology like science animation can assist students to visualize events. Science animation refers to the adoption of animated videos which are used for explaining abstract scientific concepts. There are various technologies that can be used for experiencing the real phenomenon in a virtual way like 3D animation, 2D Motion graphics and white board Animation. It will help students to feel connectedness with nature which will enable the students to experience pleasure of natural events. Some form of happiness includes excitement related to some visual or experiential events. This happiness has been fostered by organizing online meets, online conferences or virtual convocation with the help of various social media platforms like zoom, Google meet etc.

Online guidance and counseling services:

Guidance is all-round assistance to an individual in all aspects of his or her development. It makes use of the science of psychology to determine the attitude, interest, intelligence, personality and the discipline of education for providing right and suitable help. Students are guided and counseled on how to cope with different situations facing them in their school life. Students who are guided and counseled in the right way tend to know what to do and how to do such things. Students get to learn how to live in harmony with others in the school community. In India, very few schools have their own counseling cell or trained professionals. Where there are trained counseling professionals, schools can collaborate with outside professionals so that students can take up online counseling. To provide support and address mental health concerns of children during and after COVID-19, NCERT announces 'Counseling services for school students' through its trained counselors. Technology plays a greater role by providing online services such as whatsapp, mobile number and email-address, so that students wishing to seek guidance can get in touch with them. Schools can play the role of mediator by implementing the online counseling services for students. With the rise in technology and mobile phone usage leading to various issues like online bullying and smartphone addiction. Schools must take initiative towards preventive program activities as a component of school counseling practice. Counseling practices in school facilitate happiness among students. The interaction between students and counselors is interpersonal interaction that provides happiness i.e., being pleased by interpersonal interaction. The network of social relationships is the result of situations as varied as family and marriage, relationships with friends and neighbors, relationships in the workplace, or the use of new technologies related to the Internet; email, social networks, whatsapp and so many. The key is that this type of relationship affects happiness and also promotes integrity and trust in others (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993) cited in Mochan, 2018.

Yoga: This is a pathway towards happiness. It is not based on outer circumstances but helps school students to connect with their natural state of Inner self that is happiness yoga is not only confined to bodily movement and breath. It includes a powerful tool known as 'meditation' which provides direct access to the inner realm (where natural happiness dwells). Yoga after proper training provides more control over energy and mind. Yoga and Meditation can be potent methods for enhancement of emotional stability, stress related issues such as insomnia, depression in the students. Schools should recruit professionals & trained meditation gurus. Everyday should begin with at least 10-min. meditation or

'Dhyana'. After practicing meditation, students will gradually begin to feel calmness and equanimity. Equanimity refers to the evenness of the mind of a person who is not affected by joy or sorrow; good or evil, pleasure or pain; and gain or loss. He/she maintains his/her composure in spite of life's circumstances. He/She treats others as the same person as himself/herself and has no desire or expectations from them. Research shows that meditation in the classroom helps students become more focused, calm, quiet, settled and rested (Slaviero, 2017). There are technologies associated with Meditation such as meditation apps, meditation devices, meditation rooms, meditation studios etc.

Meditation apps: Meditation has become more accessible through using various apps such as Smiling Mind, Calm, Buddhify etc.

Meditation devices: Smart headband like Muse S, BrainLink Pro and Neo Rhythm. Muse S offers a great way to pick up meditation or improve on it in a fun, engaging way. But these devices are very expensive and cannot be affordable for all. It offers free meditation sessions to help us get acquainted with the Muse S's multiple sensors to determine your brainwaves, stillness, heart rate and breathing pattern.

Meditation room: Schools can create a meditation room having meditation devices like Smart headbands such as Muse S. This device can be used for technology enhanced meditation in the absence of Mediation Guru. Meditation room should be sound-proof. Meditation room acts as a laboratory for conscious transformation and spiritual awareness. In the absence of Meditation experts, who directly guide to practice meditation. Schools can purchase meditation devices which provide guided meditation and soothing music.

Meditation studio: In western countries, there has been a rise in meditation studios in larger cities. Such as 'MNDFL' in New York and 'Unplug' in Los Angeles where people come together to meditate. (Osten, 2019). Happiness arises from meditation will lead towards a higher level of happiness like spiritual happiness.

CONCLUSION

Happiness is the final goal for human beings. Technology is not the problem because it has the potential to increase our work efficiency, time management, and happiness level. There is a problem which lies in the usage of technology. We must have control over technology. We are masters of technology. We should avoid becoming slave of technology. Only controlled use of technology can facilitate the happiness among school students. When technology is detrimental for happiness in school students, its use should be minimized and gradually stopped. Excessive use of technology causes addiction which prompts more desires and cravings. These desires ultimately progress to misery. Controlled use of technology improves happiness among school students. There is a need to achieve a balance where technology usage can lead towards enhancement in happiness. Technology can only facilitate ordinary levels of happiness among school students. Presence or absence of technology doesn't affect an individual when he/she attains the highest level of happiness that is ananda or ultimate bliss or spiritual happiness. Indian tradition doesn't neglect the need of materialistic happiness but suggests individuals to go beyond immediate gratification causing temporary happiness and seeking for ultimate happiness (Rao and Paranjpe, 2015). Anand is the spiritual happiness which can be cultivated by an intrinsic spiritual state of consciousness. We can attain happiness by restraining and controlling our sensory functions which are propelled by all desires associated with emotions and cognition

(Kumar, 2002). Indian philosophers believed that one finds happiness within oneself, when the individual is detached from the external world.

REFERENCES

Agarwal,I.(2011).What Makes People Happy: A Spiritual Perspective. Shodh ganga. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10603/124603

Banavathy, V. K., & Choudry, A. (2014). Understanding happiness: A vedantic perspective. Psychological Studies, 59(2), 141–152.

Christensen,M.A., Bettencourt,L., Kaye, L., et al Direct measurements of smartphone screen-time: relationships with demographics and sleep. PLoS One.2016;11(11): e0 165331. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0165331. eCollection 2016. [PMC free article] [PubMed] [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]

Chakrawarty, S & Choudhuri, R (2016) Effects of electronic games on children and adults: A review.

Easterlin, R.A. (2003). Explaining Happiness. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 100(19), 11176-11183.

Griffith, M., Niemz, K. & Banyard, P. (2005). Prevalence of pathological internet use among university students and correlations with self-esteem, the General Health Questionnaire, and disinhibition. *Cyberpsychology & behaviour,* vol 8 (6), pp. 562-570. Retrieved from liebertpub.com.

Hampton Keith N. Lauren F. Sessions, Goulet, Eun Fa Her, et al., Social Isolation and New Technology, Washington, DC: Pew Research Centre, 2009, http://www.pewinter net.org/2009/11/04/social-isolation-and-new-technology (accessed 2 February 2018).

Heidegger, M. (1977) The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays, Garland Publishing,

Kammann, R., Farry, M., & Herbison, P. (1984). The Analysis and Measurement of Happiness as a Sense of Well-Being. *Social Indicators Research*, 15(2), 91-115.

Karadag, E. (2019). Technology addiction among students according to teacher views. *Current approaches in psychiatry.* 11 (1): pp. 101-117 doi: 10.18863/pgy.556689.

Kiran Kumar,S.K. (2002a). Indian conception of well-being. Paper presented at the first European positive psychology conference, King Alfred's College, Leicester, UK.

Kuppuswamy, B. (1977). Dharma and society- A study in social values. Delhi, India: The Macmillan Co. of India Ltd.

McCabe, K., Bray, M. A., Kehle, T. J., Theodore, L. A., & Gelbar, N. W. (2011). Promoting happiness and life satisfaction in school children. *Canadian journal of school psychology*, 26(3), 177-192.

Mochan,F. (2018). Happiness and technology: special consideration of digital technology and Internet. *International journal of interactive multimedia and artificial intelligence*, Vol 5, no 3. DOI :10.9781/ijimai.2018.12.004

Nagar,I.(2017) Self-Regulation for Sustaining Happiness and Well-beings. *psycho stud.* 63(2):181-186 retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-017-0403-0

Narula,A. (2018). Re-Searching Happiness. The national life skills, value education & school wellness program. IJSHW ISSN:2349-5464.

Nussbaum, M. C. and Sen, A. K. (1993) *The Quality of Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Rao, K. R., & Paranjpe, A. C. (2015). *Psychology in the Indian tradition*. New Delhi: Springer.

Richtel Matt "A Silicon Valley school that doesn't compute," New York Times 22 October 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/23/technology/atwaldorf-school-in-silicon-valley-technology-can-walt.html (accessed 2 February 2018).

Salagame, K. K. (2003). An Indian conception of well-being. In J. Henry (Ed.), European positive psychology proceedings. Leicester. British Psychological Society.

SCERT. (2018). Happiness Curriculum. Delhi. SCERT & DOE, Govt. of NCT of Delhi

SCERT. (2018). Teacher's Handbook for Happiness Class Grade VI-VIII. Delhi. SCERT & DOE, Govt. of NCT of Delhi

Slaviero,T.M. (2017) The Impact of Guided Meditation on Children's Behaviour, Mental Health and Well-being. Swinburne institute of technology. Retrieved from http://hdl. handle. net/1959.3/439850, 2017.

Swami Kriyananda.(2006). Education for Life Preparing Children to Meet the Challenges.Delhi.Ananda Sangha Publications

Triandis, H.C. (1994). Culture and Social Behaviour. New York: McGraw-Hill.

UNESCO (2016). Happy Schools! A Framework for Learner Well-being in the Asia-Pacific. Paris:UNESCO. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002441/24 4140e.pdf

Veenhoven, R. (2014). Consequences of Happiness In A. C. Michalos (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research* Springer, Dordrecht, Netherlands, 2014. Springer Reference Series, pp. 1200-1203. ISBN 978-94-007-0752-8; DOI: 10.1007/ 978-94-007-0753-5_536

Wadhawa,V. and Palvia, S. (2018). Is information technology hacking our happiness? JOURNAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CASE AND APPLICATION RESEARCH 2018, VOL. 20, NOS. 3-4, 151-157 Retrieved from https://doi.org/10. 1080/15228053.2018.1560954

Waterman, A.S. (1993). Two conceptions of happiness: Contrasts of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64(4), 678-691.

Website:
- www.ncert.nic.in
- https://www.system-concepts.com/insights/how-technology-is-impacting-personal-happiness/
- https://due.com/blog/technology-killing-happiness-tips-figure/
- https://medicalfuturist.com/we-used-3-devices-for-meditation-heres-what-we-found/