

Academic Happiness Questionnaire (AHQ): A Tool Construction and Standardization

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ABSTRACT

A line in the World Happiness Report 2023 states that “our success as countries should be judged by the happiness of our people”. Going by this statement, ‘Can the very same be applied in the classroom to evaluate the happiness of the children?’. Therefore, an attempt is made to measure one such things among the students in the context of their academics. Academic Happiness Questionnaire (AHQ) is such tool which measure students Happiness. The study intends to standardize a tool for measuring Happiness among the candidates on the basis of academics which is named as Academic Happiness Questionnaire. The preliminary draft consists of 14 items with 4 factors namely Institution, Teachers, Family and Friends, which were piloted among 73 graduates. ‘t’ test and the internal consistency measure (Cronbach’s alpha) were used to standardize the items. On completion of analyses the final draft consists of 13 questions with four factors having the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) values as 0.761, 0.888, 0.832 and 0.809 makes the tool reliable for the main study.

Keywords: *Academic happiness, Institutional happiness, Family happiness, Peer group happiness, tool standardization*

The success of a nation nowadays is not just measured in terms of economic growth alone but by the happiness and the well-being of their citizens. When such citizens are happy, they make their surroundings happier which it reflects in the harmony of the society, thus at large it accounts to the maximum productivity in terms of economic well-being of a nation. World Happiness Report is one such initiatives done by the United Nations. Though education is not directly listed as a factor in measuring UN ‘s Happiness Report, it is interlinked in all the main factors of this report viz Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Life expectancy Social Support, Freedom to make life choices, Generosity, etc. In this context education and happiness are intercorrelated and becomes inseparable. Therefore, here arises the quest for finding the amount of happiness transacted in education arena.

Martin Seligman (2011) defines “happiness as part of overall well-being, which includes positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment”. Diener (1984) describes happiness in terms of subjective well-being, which include life satisfaction and the

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balance between positive and negative emotions. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) is one such tool to measure an individual's overall happiness or well-being. This tool consists of 29 statements with each statement on a 6-point Likert scale typically ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 6 as strongly agree and the shorter form (OHQ-SF) of it containing 8 statements covering all the aspects of original 29 items. As 'Happy classrooms' is the new philosophical tagline of the present educational environment, considering OHQ as the basis, a tool named as Academic Happiness Questionnaire (AHQ) is modelled and developed to measure the academic happiness.

Operational Definition

Happiness is a state of positive emotion which makes one feel well-being and content in terms of life satisfaction. When it comes to academic of any student it comprises of four important stakeholders namely Institution, Teachers, Family and Friends. Institutions have the potential to create an environment that supports and enhances happiness through their policies and practices. Teachers' transactional activities during the class and course of program shall reflect in happiness and well-being of the learners. Shared experiences among Peer group (friends) may contribute to the social wellbeing of the individual. A student approximately spends nearly one eighth of the time in these three areas, therefore it becomes indispensable to measure these thrust areas. Family support is the fundamental factor in terms of emotional and monetary support to the students. These stakeholders contribute to the Happiness of an individual in any learning environment (college/ schools). Happiness in this study therefore refers to the contentment of students based on four factors namely Institution, Teachers, Family and Friends.

Objective

The main objective of the study is to devise a tool that caters to assess the Happiness of the students in learning environment. Academic Happiness Questionnaire (AHQ) has incorporated the **Happy School Criteria** measures laid by the United Nations Organization Namely People, Process and Place in this tool. This questionnaire has constructs covering the happy school criteria's such as friendships and relationship in the school community, respect for diversity and differences, reasonable workload, team work, engaging teaching learning approach, learner freedom, learning as a team, etc.

METHODOLOGY

Pilot Study

According to Louis Cohen, "a pilot study is a small-scale research project conducted to test the feasibility, time, cost, and potential challenges of a proposed study". (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Pilot study is a kind of trailer version for a larger research project that aims to eliminate the flaws to ensure a feasible, reliable main study at large.

AHQ tool was designed with fourteen questions that covers four factors. Content validity was obtained from the subject experts and the relevant feedback from the experts were carried on, then pilot study was carried among 73 graduates from both online and offline form. The Each item of the questionnaire has 6-point Likert Scale which amounts the agreeableness of the statements.

Scoring Techniques:

All the fourteen statements have the options ranging from Strongly Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Moderately Agree, Strongly Agree and the

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markings were recorded as 1,2,3,4,5,6 in the respective order. SPSS version 22 is used for the statistical analysis.

Items Selection

One sample t test is used here to determine whether the sample comes from a particular population or not. Since the t-test score is greater than 2.58 at $\alpha = 1\%$ level for all the 14 items (refer Table -I) it suggests that the constructs are statistically significant. That is the Academic Happiness among the candidates are not equal to the average level. Therefore, all the items are retained.

Table I – Item wise analysis of AHQ

Factor	Item no.	Question content	't' value	'p' value	Remarks
Institution	1	I am particularly pleased with the present programme of study.	9.311	.000	Retain
	2	My institution practices well-being of the learners.	15.127	.000	Retain
	3	I enjoy the diversity (cultural differences) practiced in my institution.	14.131	.000	Retain
	4	I involve in teamwork and boost up the collaborative spirit of my institution.	14.830	.000	Retain
	5	Fun and engaging teaching-learning approaches are carried out in my institution.	11.076	.000	Retain
Teachers	6	Conversation with my teachers increases my confidence.	13.279	.000	Retain
	7	I am intensely interested in attending all the classes.	11.793	.000	Retain
	8	I feel I have great take away of learning after the classroom transaction of the teacher.	17.023	.000	Retain
Family	9	I feel happier when I spend time with my family.	24.724	.000	Retain
	10	My parents give liberty (freedom) to pursue the courses (programmes).	26.002	.000	Retain
	11	My parent's gives me learner freedom (do not compel (force) for exam preparations).	7.627	.000	Retain
Friends	12	I feel happy when I am with my peers.	19.016	.000	Retain
	13	Learning as a team with my friends boosts me in my academics.	8.808	.000	Retain
	14	I feel that I'm able to take anything positive from my friends.	11.220	.000	Retain

Reliability:

“Reliability is essentially an umbrella term for dependability, consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over group of respondents”. (Cohen). It indicates how consistent are the results when administered at different point of times. In this study reliability (internal consistency) is measured using Cronbach's alpha. The four factors of AHQ were measured separately and their reliability Cronbach's alpha scores scored are tabulated in Table II.

Table II – Factor wise Internal reliability value

Factor	Item no.	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted	Cronbach's Alpha (factor wise)	Remarks	Item no. in final draft
Institution	1	0.784	0.761	Retained	1
	2	0.686		Retained	2
	3	0.751		Retained	3
	4	0.693		Retained	4
	5	0.666		Retained	5
Teachers	6	0.839	0.888	Retained	6
	7	0.822		Retained	7
	8	0.857		Retained	8
Family	9	0.368	0.475	Retained	9
	10	0.146	After deleting Item no.11 the new Cronbach's Alpha is 0.832	Retained	10
	11	0.832		Deleted	
Friends	12	0.823	0.809	Retained	11
	13	0.700		Retained	12
	14	0.650		Retained	13

From the table II it is found that the Institution factor has 0.761 as Cronbach's alpha which is acceptable, indicating moderate internal consistency and no further items are deleted in this factor as all the items theoretically measures the objective. Factors like Teachers and Friends have good reliability values whereas in Family factor the Cronbach's alpha is 0.475 which on deletion of item number 11, the new Cronbach's alpha becomes 0.832 which is good measure of internal consistency reliability. Thus, the internal consistency of the tool is established.

DISCUSSION

The Academic Happiness Questionnaire (AHQ) in its final draft consists of thirteen items with four factors viz Institutional happiness - 5 items, Teachers - 3 items, Familial happiness – 2 items, Friends -3 items with internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) values as 0.761, 0.888, 0.832 and 0.809 respectively. Thus, this pilot project has successfully demonstrated the viability for doing the study at large with the AHQ. This standardized tool has successfully met out the main objective of the study that will help the educational fraternity to measure the happiness in the academic setup.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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