

## A Mediation Effect of Self-Esteem on the Association between Mood and Happiness

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### ABSTRACT

The current study was examined the role of mediation effect of self-esteem on the relationship between mood (both positive and negative affect) and happiness. Understanding this mediation effect might help to clarify how self-esteem affects on overall wellbeing. Total 109 individuals were the sample of our study. Happiness (Hpp), negative affect (NA), positive affect (PA), and self-esteem (SE) were assessed in the present study. A correlation study was conducted to assess the relationships between self-esteem, mood (both positive and negative affect) and happiness. Path analysis was used to assess the direct and indirect effect of PA and NA on happiness through self-esteem. The results indicated that self-esteem was a minor predictor of happiness. There was no significant mediation effect of self-esteem between PANAS (PA, NA) and happiness. The non-significant indirect effects suggest that the relationship between mood and happiness in this group was not mediated by self-esteem.

**Keywords:** *Self-esteem, Happiness, Mood, College students, Positive affect, Negative affect*

Self-esteem is the primary component of human psychology that determines how individuals perceive and evaluate themselves. Self-esteem also affects how people feel, think, and act in different contexts (Rosenberg, 1965). It affects many aspects of life, including relationships, scholastic and personal development, and mental health and wellness. A person's overall evaluation of their values, potential, talents, and significance is known as their self-esteem. It is a gauge of one's self-worth and self-assurance in one's ability to go over challenges (S., 1967). Instead of being static, self-esteem is flexible and responds to both internal and external factors. It stands for the region in which people respect themselves and have faith in their ability to overcome obstacles in life. The components of self-esteem include behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Harter, 1999).

"Mood" refers to a rather permanent emotional state or disposition that colors a person's perception of the world and influences their ideas, behaviors, and experiences (Morris, 1989). Mood is a more constant and all-encompassing state than emotions, which are often strong and transient reactions to specific situations (Tellegen, 1985). An individual's overall emotional tone and psychological attitude are shaped by their mood. A person's mood is a semi-permanent emotional state that influences their overall behavior and worldview. It's not

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the same as emotions, which are more intense but fleeting reactions to specific stimuli (Ekman, 1994). Mood is more pervasive and long-lasting than emotions, which are often triggered by internal concepts or external events (Larsen, 2000). A person's mood frequently remains in the backdrop of their awareness. Mood is an elusive notion, difficult to define. It can be seen as a transient concept that one cannot fixate on (Ekman, 1994).

Being happy is a state of being that is both hard to achieve and highly desired. What it is to be human is defined by a complex interplay of emotions, experiences, and perceptions. In its broadest sense, happiness is often understood to be a condition of complete well-being, fulfillment, and contentment (Oishi, 2002). But its complexity touch on society, psychology, philosophy, neurology, and much more than this succinct explanation can convey. It is vital to dissect happiness into its component pieces, such as life satisfaction, positive emotions, and subjective well-being, as well as the factors that enable its attainment and maintenance, in order to shed light on the multifaceted nature of happy. Subjective well-being, a major concept in the study of happiness, refers to people's subjective evaluations of their own lives, which include emotive and cognitive aspects ((Diener, 1999). Happiness and our subjective well-being are mostly determined by positive emotions. Feelings like happiness, gratitude, love, and calmness, for instance, enhance our experiences in the here and now while simultaneously promoting our resilience and long-term mental health.

Self-esteem, happiness, and mood are all strongly related. Happiness is increased by positive emotions because they foster sentiments of worth and competence, which in turn raise self-esteem (Baumeister, 2003). On the other hand, low self-esteem can result from unfavorable feelings and reduce enjoyment. Self-esteem serves as a mediator: whereas low self-esteem amplifies the effects of bad moods and diminishes happiness, high self-esteem builds resistance against bad moods and maintains happiness (Orth, 2008). Therefore, preserving a high sense of self-worth and general pleasure requires controlling mood through uplifting events and emotional control. This link emphasizes how crucial psychological health is to leading a happy and satisfying life ((Fredrickson, 2001)

### **METHOD**

#### *Objectives*

- To investigate the relationship between self-esteem, positive and negative mood, and happiness among university students.
- A mediation effect of self-esteem on the association between mood and happiness.

#### *Research Design*

The current study uses a correlation research to see the connections between mood, happiness, and self-esteem. The pen paper test was distributed to the college students, students of different age groups, religion, educational qualification. It was a correlation research design.

#### *Variables*

- **Dependent Variable:** Happiness
- **Mediating Variable:** Self- esteem
- **Independent Variable:** Mood

**Sampling Method:** The data was collected from 109 university students of age group 18 – 25 years using convenience sampling method.

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### **Inclusion Criteria:**

1. Participants were included from college students within a specified age group
2. Age Group - 18 to 25 years

### **Exclusion Criteria:**

1. Excluding people who were specific medical conditions.
2. Those who do not fit inside a designated age range were also eliminated.

### **Instruments Used**

- 1. Positive and negative affect schedule (PANAS-SF):** A popular psychological instrument for assessing a person's positive and negative affect is the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). The PANAS was created in 1988 by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen. It comprises of two separate scales, each with 10 items that represent various moods and emotions. Within a certain time period, such the last week, respondents assess how much of each emotion they have experienced. While the Negative Affect scale gauges the degree of discomfort and unpleasant involvement, the good Affect scale gauges the degree of good emotions like zeal and attentiveness. Because of its validity and reliability, the PANAS is widely used in clinical and research settings to evaluate emotional states and their effects on a range of psychological conditions.
- 2. Rosenberg's self-esteem scale by Morris Rosenberg (1965):** The 10 items Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was developed in 1965 by sociologist Morris Rosenberg, it is one of the most used tools for assessing self-esteem. Respondents rate their agreement with each statement on a four-point Likert scale, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." To account for response bias, five of the items have positive wording and five have negative wording. The RSES is widely used in psychology research and practice to assess individual self-esteem levels in a variety of demographics and circumstances because of its well-known simplicity, reliability, and validity.
- 3. Subjective Happiness scale (SHS):** SHS developed in 1999 by Lyubomirsky and Lepper, the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) is a quick and useful way to assess the subjective happiness. The SHS consists of 4 items that ask respondents to use a seven-point Likert scale to score their personal happiness and compare it to others'. The SHS valid and reliable tool for measuring general happiness and well-being, its good psychometric qualities, ease of use, and simplicity.

### **Procedure**

The researcher collected data using both online and offline modes, in an online mode, the researcher sent the link of the Goggle form to the participants through social media whereas in offline mode the researcher provided brief description of the research study and its objectives. Interested participants were given sheets to fill out individually. The investigator established a common rapport with the participants to make them feel comfortable and at ease. The participants were asked to give their agreement and supply demographic or population details before being given with the specific instructions for both the scales. It took around 1 week to gather data from the young adults.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The socio-demographic data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. A one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation were utilized to determine the association between panas, happiness,

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and self-esteem by using IBM-SPSS software, mediation was analyzed to assess the effect of mood on the association between happiness and self-esteem.

### RESULTS

The current study analyzed from 109 participants, mainly young adults age ranges from 18-25 years as shown in table 1, the sample comprised with participants are belong to different community Hindu- 89, Muslim- 4, Christian- 6, others- 9. Education– UG-75, PG-33. Overall, this data provides a snapshot of the research participants socio-demographic characteristics and include that the sample is varied in terms of age, religion, and education which may support for the study's generalizability.

#### Descriptives Statistics

**Table 1. Shows the mean, standard, deviation and sample size (N) for the variables: Panas p, Panas n, Self-esteem and Happiness by the religion.**

		N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F	Sig.
Panas P	Hindu	89	35.6854	7.81548	<b>2.598</b>	<b>.056</b>
	Muslim	4	38.0000	8.75595		
	Christian	6	30.8333	5.26941		
	Others	9	29.5556	5.52519		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>34.9907</b>	<b>7.75621</b>		
Panas N	Hindu	89	25.5506	8.46653	<b>.975.071</b>	
	Muslim	4	24.0000	17.60682		
	Christian	6	24.5000	4.92950		
	Others	9	25.1111	5.23078		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>25.3981</b>	<b>8.42442</b>		
Happiness total	Hindu	89	18.3258	3.44032	<b>.310</b>	<b>.818</b>
	Muslim	4	20.0000	1.82574		
	Christian	6	18.1667	4.70815		
	Others	9	18.5556	3.53946		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>18.3981</b>	<b>3.45042</b>		
Self-esteem total	Hindu	89	24.1685	2.14919	<b>.878</b>	<b>.455</b>
	Muslim	4	23.2500	1.70783		
	Christian	6	22.8333	2.13698		
	Others	9	24.0000	2.82843		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>24.0463</b>	<b>2.19338</b>		

The differences in Positive Affect (PANAS P), Negative Affect (PANAS N), Happiness Total, and Self-Esteem Total scores across the four groups were investigated using a series of one-way ANOVAs.

One-way ANOVAs were used to examine the variations in the four groups' results for Positive Affect (PANAS P), Negative Affect (PANAS N), Happiness Total, and Self-Esteem Total. The findings revealed no statistically significant variations in the following areas: Happiness Total, ( $F(3, 104) = 0.310$ ), ( $p = .818$ ); Positive Affect, ( $F(3, 104) = 2.60$ ), ( $p = .056$ ); Negative Affect, ( $F(3, 104) = 0.071$ ), ( $p = .975$ ); and Self-Esteem Total, ( $F(3,$

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104) = 0.878), ( $p = .455$ ). Overall, the results showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the four groups' scores on these measures.

**Table-2 Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Panas p	1.768	3	104	.158
Panas n	3.553	3	104	.017
Happiness total	.977	3	104	.407
Self-esteem total	.674	3	104	.570

To determine if the variances of happiness, self-esteem, negative affect (PANAS-N), and positive affect (PANAS-P) were comparable between several groups, the Levene test was employed.

The test yielded a non-significant result ( $p = .158$ ) for PANAS-P (positive affect), suggesting that group variances were equal. The test did, however, provide a significant result ( $p = .017$ ) for PANAS-N (negative affect), suggesting that the assumption of equal variances across groups was not satisfied. The test also revealed a non-significant result ( $p = .407$ ) for happiness, indicating that group variances were comparable.

There were substantial differences in the variances of negative affect among the groups, despite equal variations in happiness and positive affect.

**Table-3 Shows the mean, standard, deviation and sample size (N) for the variables: Panas p, Panas n, Self-esteem and Happiness by the courses.**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Panas p	UG	75	35.0667	8.13623	.023	.879
	PG	33	34.8182	6.93025		
	Total	108	34.9907	7.75621		
Panas n	UG	75	26.1600	9.33613	2.027	.157
	PG	33	23.6667	5.59390		
	Total	108	25.3981	8.42442		
Happiness total	UG	75	18.6133	3.48314	.954	.331
	PG	33	17.9091	3.37605		
	Total	108	18.3981	3.45042		
Self-esteem total	UG	75	24.2800	2.27537	2.834	.095
	PG	33	23.5152	1.92226		
	Total	108	24.0463	2.19338		

The information reveals the attitudes of two groups of individuals towards happiness, both good and negative emotions, and self-worth. In general, Group 1, consisting of 75 individuals, expressed somewhat greater levels of positivity and self-esteem in comparison to Group 2, which consisted of 33 people. Independent samples t-tests were used to compare the Happiness Total ( $t(106) = 0.96$ ), ( $p = .331$ ), Positive Affect ( $t(106) = 0.15$ ), ( $p = .879$ ), Negative Affect ( $t(106) = 1.42$ ), ( $p = .157$ ), and Self-Esteem Total ( $t(106) = 1.69$ ), ( $p = .095$ ) did not exhibit any significant

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differences between Group 1 and Group 2. Overall, these metrics did not show any statistically significant differences between the two groups.

**Table -4**

### Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Panas p	.739	1	106	.392
Panas n	8.475	1	106	.004
Happiness total	.295	1	106	.588
Self-esteem total	1.571	1	106	.213

The Levene test was used to look at the homogeneity of variances over a wide range of variables. For the "panas p" and "happiness total" variables, there were no significant variance differences across groups, according to Levene statistics of .739 ( $p = .392$ ) and .295 ( $p = .588$ ), respectively. Similarly, the Levene value of 1.571 ( $p = .213$ ) for the "self esteem total" variable suggests that there is no discernible difference in variances across groups. Conversely, a significant difference in variances for the "panas n" variable (Levene statistic = 8.475,  $p = .004$ ) indicated heterogeneity between groups. Finally, whereas the variances for most of the variables were typically homogeneous, the "panas n" variable demonstrated substantial variance heterogeneity.

**Table-5 CORRELATIONS**

		Panas p	Panas n	happiness total	Self-esteem total
Panas p	Pearson Correlation	1	-.073	.024	.116
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.451	.809	.230
	N	108	108	108	108
Panas n	Pearson Correlation	-.073	1	.056	.235*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.451		.566	.014
	N	108	108	108	108
Happiness total	Pearson Correlation	.024	.056	1	-.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.809	.566		.507
	N	108	108	109	109
Self-esteem total	Pearson Correlation	.116	.235*	-.064	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.230	.014	.507	
	N	108	108	109	109

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Using correlation analysis, the relationships between the measured variables were examined. Neither Panas p nor Panas n ( $r = -.073$ ,  $p = .451$ ) nor Panas p and Happiness overall ( $r = .024$ ,  $p = .809$ ) showed any discernible relationship in the data. There was a marginally positive correlation between Panas p and Self esteem total, but it was not statistically significant ( $r = .116$ ,  $p = .230$ ). There was no significant correlation between Panas n and Happiness Total ( $r = .056$ ,  $p = .566$ ). However, an interesting finding indicated that Panas n and Self esteem total had a high positive connection ( $r = .235$ ,  $p = .014$ ). Finally, there was no statistically

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significant correlation ( $r = -.064$ ,  $p = .507$ ) between the overall happiness and the total self-esteem. While most of the variables did not exhibit significant relationships, the positive link between Panas n and Self esteem total suggests a potential linkage that warrants further investigation.

In summary, very few factors showed any significant correlations. However, there was a significant positive correlation between Panas n and Self esteem total, suggesting a potential relationship between the two variables.

**Table-6 correlations**

		<b>Panas p</b>	<b>Panas n</b>	<b>happiness total</b>	<b>Self-esteem total</b>	<b>Age</b>
Panas p	Pearson Correlation	1	-.073	.024	.116	.170
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.451	.809	.230	.078
	N	108	108	108	108	108
Panas n	Pearson Correlation	-.073	1	.056	.235*	-.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.451		.566	.014	.355
	N	108	108	108	108	108
happiness total	Pearson Correlation	.024	.056	1	-.064	.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.809	.566		.507	.768
	N	108	108	109	109	108
Self-esteem total	Pearson Correlation	.116	.235*	-.064	1	-.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.230	.014	.507		.487
	N	108	108	109	109	108
Age	Pearson Correlation	.170	-.090	.029	-.068	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.078	.355	.768	.487	
	N	108	108	108	108	108

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

The correlation investigation reveals a large number of significant and non-significant correlations between the variables: age, happiness, self-esteem, positive affect (PANAS-P), and negative affect (PANAS-N). Positive affect (PANAS-P) and negative affect (PANAS-N) did not appear to be related. Happiness with one's self-esteem and age did not significantly correlate with good affect. Happiness and age showed a substantial positive correlation with negative affect (PANAS-N), while self-esteem showed a stronger correlation. Happiness was not considerably correlated with age or self-esteem. Self-esteem did not significantly correlate with age. These results show that negative affect is the only variable in this sample that significantly correlates with self-esteem, suggesting that self-esteem tends to increase in tandem with negative affect. Other correlations that did not reach statistical significance existed between the variables.

**MEDIATION ANALYSIS**

**Table-7**

**Direct effects**

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
PA → Happiness	0.018	0.043	0.406	0.685	-0.067	0.102
NA → Happiness	0.032	0.041	0.798	0.425	-0.047	0.112

*Note.* Delta method standard errors, normal theory confidence intervals, ML estimator.

The direct effects research demonstrates the relationships between happiness, negative affect (NA), and positive affect (PA).

Happiness was not substantially impacted by positive affect (PA); an estimate from the study showed that there was no significant correlation between happiness and negative affect (NA). Based on confidence intervals obtained from normal theory using a maximum likelihood estimator and standard errors of the Delta approach, these results suggest that happiness in this sample is not significantly influenced by either positive or negative affect.

**Table-8**

**Indirect effects**

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
PA → SE → Happiness	-0.005	0.007	-0.743	0.457	-0.019	0.008
NA → SE → Happiness	-0.009	0.011	-0.823	0.410	-0.029	0.012

*Note.* Delta method standard errors, normal theory confidence intervals, ML estimator.

The link between happiness, positive affect (PA), negative affect (NA), and self-esteem (SE) is examined through the lens of indirect effects analysis. In this above table we with the help estimate the indirect impact of positive affect (PA) on happiness through self-esteem (SE) was not significant. With an estimate the indirect effect of negative affect (NA) on happiness through self-esteem was also not significant. These findings suggest that, in this sample, self-esteem does not act as a mediator in the link between happiness and either positive or negative affect. They were obtained using the maximum likelihood estimator and standard errors of the Delta method in normal theory confidence ranges.

**Table-9**

**Total effects**

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
PA → Happiness	0.012	0.043	0.289	0.773	-0.072	0.096
NA → Happiness	0.024	0.039	0.602	0.547	-0.054	0.101

*Note.* Delta method standard errors, normal theory confidence intervals, ML estimator.

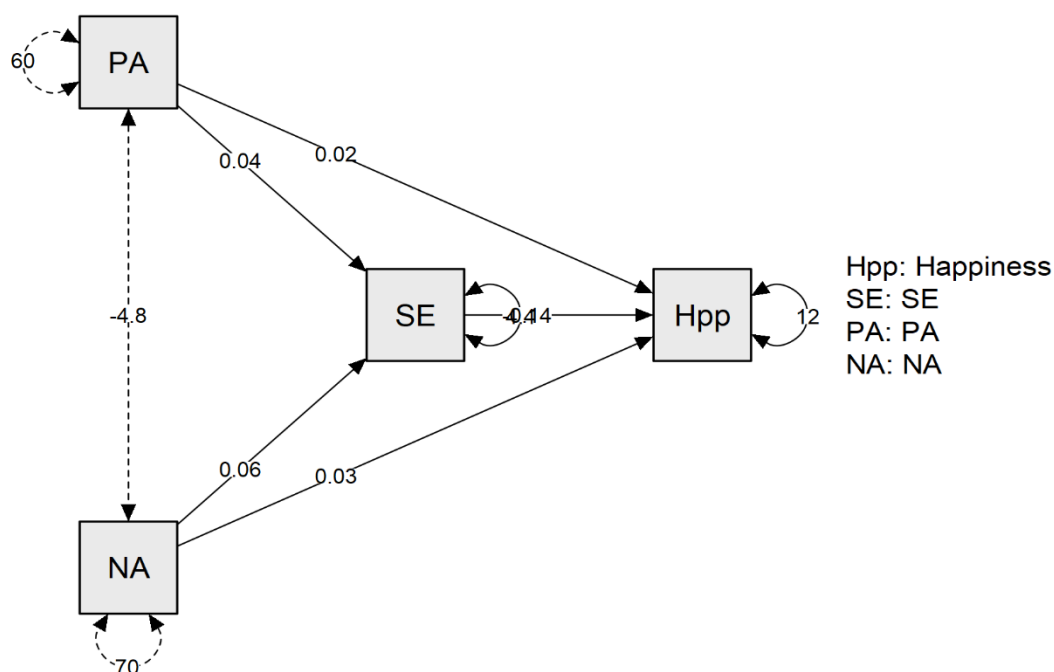
The total effects study looks at how happiness is affected overall by both positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA). In the above data with an estimate SE, z, and CI the overall



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impact of positive affect (PA) on happiness was not significant. As for the overall impact of negative affect (NA), it had an estimate and was not statistically significant. These findings imply that neither positive nor negative affect has a substantial overall influence on happiness within this population. They were computed using the Delta method standard errors and normal theory confidence intervals using a maximum likelihood estimator.

### PATH PLOT



The links between happiness (Hpp), self-esteem (SE), negative affect (NA), and positive affect (PA) are depicted in the accompanying route diagram. The diagram's meaning is as follows:

- **PA to Hpp:** A path coefficient of 0.02 indicates a tiny, non-significant positive impact, which is the direct relationship between happiness (Hpp) and positive affect (PA).
- **NA to Hpp:** A little, non-significant positive impact is indicated by the path coefficient of 0.03, which shows the direct relationship between happiness (Hpp) and negative affect (NA).
- **PA to SE:** With a path coefficient of 0.04—a little, non-significant positive effect—positive affect (PA) directly influences self-esteem (SE).
- **NA to SE:** A path coefficient of 0.06 indicates a slight, non-significant positive link between negative affect (NA) and self-esteem (SE).
- **SE to Hpp:** A moderate, positive, and probably significant relationship exists between self-esteem (SE) and happiness (Hpp), as indicated by the path coefficient of 0.44.

Happiness in this group is not significantly impacted directly or indirectly by positive or negative factors, according to the research, which also shows that self-esteem is a critical factor in happiness.

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to investigate how self-esteem among college students mediates the link between mood and happiness. It specifically aimed to comprehend how the relationship between the mood states (both good and negative) and general happiness of college students is influenced by their feeling of self-worth. With a total sample size of 108 participants, the targeted demographic comprised male and female college students between the ages of 18 and 25. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between the mood effects of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) and self-esteem (SE). The sample's self-esteem and mood levels may not vary enough to find significant connections if they are reasonably homogeneous (Smith, 2024). Potential correlations that may otherwise be apparent in a more varied sample may be hidden by this homogeneity (davide, 2015). It's possible that mood—both good and negative affect—and self-esteem have a complicated relationship. Direct correlation identification may be hampered by the presence of other mediating or unmeasured factors that influence this link (laura, 2016). A combination of measurement problems, sample characteristics, and the intricacy of the constructs themselves might be the cause of the lack of substantial association. good and negative impacts are measured independently on the PANAS scale, and strong self-esteem may more powerfully counterbalance unpleasant feelings than increase good ones (Brown, 2024). For the direct association between happiness (Hpp) and positive affect (PA), the path coefficient of 0.02 suggests a small, non-significant positive influence (falguni, 2022). Contentment and Adverse Effect (NA): The path coefficient of 0.03 for the direct link between happiness (Hpp) and negative affect (NA) indicates a slight, non-significant positive influence. Positive Affect (PA) and Self-Esteem: With a path coefficient of 0.04 indicating a marginally significant positive effect, self-esteem (SE) is positively influenced by positive affect (PA). Negative Affect (NA) and Self-Esteem: With a path coefficient of 0.06, which indicates a small, non-significant positive influence, self-esteem (SE) is directly influenced by negative affect (NA). Happiness and Self-Esteem: A path coefficient of 0.44 indicates a moderately positive and perhaps substantial effect in the direct link between happiness (Hpp) and self-esteem (SE). There was a negative correlation between PA and NA, as indicated by their covariance of -4.8. This implies that negative affect tends to diminish and vice versa when good affect rises. Overall, the study indicates that although happiness is greatly influenced by one's sense of self-worth, there is no direct correlation between happy and either good or negative mood state (Brown, 2024)s. There seems to be a complicated link between mood and self-esteem that may be mediated by a number of variables that the present model does not fully account for (watson, 1988).

### CONCLUSION

The results indicated that self-esteem was a minor predictor of happiness. There was no significant mediation effect of self-esteem between PANAS (PA, NA) and happiness. The non-significant indirect effects suggest that the relationship between mood and happiness in this group was not mediated by self-esteem.

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