A study Exploring the Relationship between Subjective Happiness & Life Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Happiness and life satisfaction are the two terms which are most important for the well- being of a person. When people list the key characteristics of a good life, they are likely to include happiness and satisfaction from life. Therefore, the question what makes us happy and satisfied with our life might seem like a deeply individual inquiry. Happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being characterized by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. On the other hand, Life satisfaction is the way a person evaluates his or her life and how he or she feels about where it is going in the future. The present study tries to explore the relationship between Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction and the difference between Subjective happiness and the Life Satisfaction between the genders. For this purpose a sample of 60 students were taken and Subjective Happiness scale and Life Satisfaction scale were administered on them. Subjective Happiness scale was developed by Sonja Lyubomirsky (1997) and Life Satisfaction scale was developed by ED Diener (1984). The results showed that there is a significant correlation between subjective happiness and life satisfaction and among the students; male students

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were high on both the scales i.e. in subjective happiness and life satisfaction scale.

Keywords: *Subjective happiness, Life satisfaction*

Happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being characterized by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. Philosophers and religious thinkers often define happiness in terms of living a good life, or flourishing, rather than simply as an emotion. Happiness can mean many different things to many people and has number of definations. According to Webster, Happiness gives you a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction. Positive psychology researcher Sonja Lyubomirsky elaborates, describing happiness as "the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile." One can say that happiness is " to wanting to what I have and to have what I want" . In addition to making us feel good, studies have found that happiness actually improves other aspects of our lives. Here is an overview of some of the good stuff that research has linked to happiness.

- Happiness is good for our health: Happy people are less likely to get sick, and they live longer.
- Happiness is good for our relationships: Happy people are more likely to get married and have fulfilling marriages, and they have more friends.
- Happy people make more money and are more productive at work.
- Happy people are more generous.
- Happy people cope better with stress and trauma.
- Happy people are more creative and are better able to see the big picture.
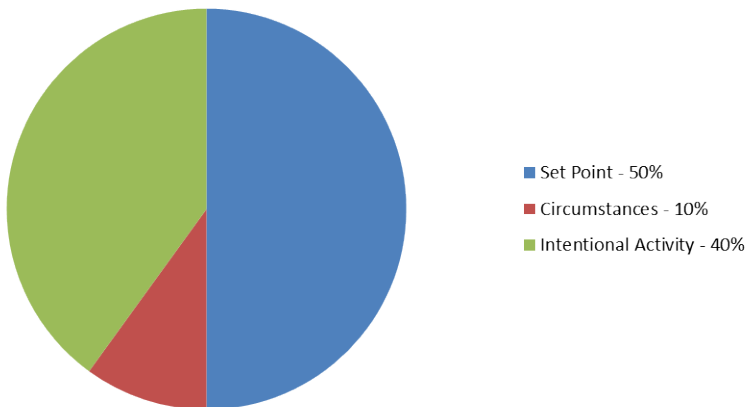
Subjective Happiness
When we talk about subjective happiness, we actually are talking about the well being of that person. Therefore, one can say

thatSubjective well-being (SWB) refers to how people experience the quality of their lives and includes both emotional reactions and cognitive judgments. Moreover, Psychologists have defined happiness as a combination of life satisfaction and the relative frequency of positive and negative affect.Subjective well-being can be simply defined as the individual's current evaluation of his/her happiness. According to Ed Diener, an American psychologist, subjective well-being is multidimensional and includes positive and negative emotions (e.g. the frequency, duration and intensity of joy, pleasure, happiness but also anger, guilt, fear, depression, sadness), as well as global life satisfaction, and satisfaction with different aspects of one's life (partnership, income, friends). In a 30-year longitudinal study, participants who were high in positive emotions were found to have lower rates of many health problems. Some of these illnesses/problems include lower death rates from heart disease, suicide, accidents, homicides, mental illnesses, drug dependency, and liver disease related to alcoholism. Additionally, results showed that depressed participants were more likely to have heart attacks and recurrences of heart attacks when compared to happy people.

According to Sonja Lyubomirsky the determinants of happiness are a combination of a person's genetic set-point, intentional activities and life circumstances.

Determinants of Happiness

- ■ Set Point - 50%
- ■ Circumstances - 10%
- ■ Intentional Activity - 40%

It has also been see that happiness enhances creativity, productivity and longevity. For instance, in a follow-back study of 180 nuns in the USA, Danner et al. (2001) found that the happiness expressed in essays that the nuns wrote as they entered the order was associated with their longevity. This was a carefully controlled study. All of the participants had similar lifestyles. They were all unmarried nuns who worked as teachers, did not smoke or drink and ate a simple balanced diet throughout their adult life. When they wrote their essays as they entered the order, they gave a biographical sketch and stated their hopes for the future, but had no idea that these essays would be used in a study of happiness and longevity. More than half a century later, the amount of positive emotions in the essays was judged by trained raters who did not know the age of the participants. Of the happiest quarter 90 per cent lived past the age of 85 compared with only 34 per cent of the least happy quarter.

Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction is the way a person evaluates his or her life and how he or she feels about where it is going in the future. It is a measure of well-being and may be assessed in terms of mood, satisfaction with relations with others and with achieved goals, self-concepts, and self-perceived ability to cope with daily life. It is having a favourable attitude of one's life as a whole rather than an assessment of current feelings. Life satisfaction has been measured in relation to economic standing, amount of education, experiences, and residence, as well as many other topics. Life satisfaction is affected by numerous aspects of life. These so called life domains can roughly be classified into two categories: 1) micro-social life domains (or individual living conditions) including features such as work related conditions, subjective health conditions, marital status, financial household status, and 2) macro-social life domains (or societal conditions) including aspects such as governmental performance, political democracy, welfare growth and economic equality.

Relationship between Happiness and Life Satisfaction

The question of what makes one happy and satisfied with their life might seem like a deeply individual inquiry. To measure the happiness and life satisfaction a study was done by Matthew Ericson and Tony Vinson, to look upon the key variables and their influence upon the happiness and life satisfaction of Australians. These were:

- Gender and Age: Women and men are equally likely to be happy but life satisfaction is not a constant throughout life with a dip in mid-life then resurgence as people grow older.

- Family: People who were married had a high degree of life satisfaction with 60.9% of married respondents describing themselves as highly satisfied compared to 47.2% of individuals in de facto relationships and 38.4% of respondents who were single/never married. Further to this, having a larger family, children, and possessing a high degree of trust in one's family were all factors that enhanced life satisfaction and happiness.

- Health: Being in good health predisposes individuals to a higher degree of life satisfaction and happiness. Respondents who identified as very happy were 26 times more likely to describe their health as very good rather than poor.

- Pondering the meaning of life: People who thought about the meaning and purpose of life were less likely to be satisfied with their life than those who rarely or never engaged in such reflection.

Following is a table showing the most influential factors for an individual's level of happiness and life satisfaction

The most influential factors for an individual's level of happiness are:	The most influential factors for an individual's level of life satisfaction are:
• Their level of Health	• The level of choice and control that they have over their life
• The level of choice and control that they have over their life	• Their level of health
• Whether they are married	

or not • Their level of confidence in the press • Whether they trust their family or not	• Whether they are married or not • The extent to which they see themselves as a part of a local community

Objectives
- To assess the relationship between Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction.
- To assess the difference between Subjective happiness and the Life Satisfaction between the gender.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The design for the present study will be of correlational bivariate data, where we will see that whether the 2 variables, i.e. Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction have any relationship or not

Sample

Random Sampling method was used to collect the data. For this study a sample of 60 students (30 boys and 30 girls) were taken from Manav Rachna International University. The average age of the student was 20. The sample population was the residents of NCR and Delhi.

Assessment Tool

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) (Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 1999) is a four item measure of global subjective happiness. Lyubomirsky and Lepper claim that SHS reflects "a broader and more molar category of wellbeing and taps into more global psychological phenomena" (1999, p. 139). In completing the SHS, respondents rate four items on different Likert scales, each ranging from 1 to 7. Participants are asked to 'circle the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing you'. The first item asks respondents whether, in general, they consider themselves to be (1) 'not a very

happy person' to (7) 'a very happy person'. The second item asks if, compared to their peers, they consider themselves to be (1) 'less happy" to (7) "more happy". Both the third and fourth items give descriptions and ask 'to what extent does this characterization describe you?' with responses ranging from 'not at all' to 'a great deal'. For item three, the description is some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything', and item four is 'some people are generally not very happy. Although they are nit depresses, they never seem as happy as they might be'.

Scores are to talled for the four items, and range from 4 to 28. An average of the four items provides a composite score for global subjective happiness; most research reports this score. The test-retest reliability of subjective happiness scale is 0.86 and the validity is 0.62. The satisfaction and life scale (SwLS) (Diener et al., 1985) is a five item measure that assesses an individual's global judgement of life satisfaction as a whole. The SwLS measures the cognitive component of SWB, and provides an integrated judgement of how a person's life as a whole is going. In completing the SwLS, participants rate five statements (In most ways my life is close to my ideal, the conditions of my life are excellent , I am satisfied with my life , so far I have gotten the important things I want in life, if I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing) on a seven point Likert scale, ranging from (1) ' strongly disagree', to (4) ' neither agree nor disagree', to (7) ' 'strongly agree'. The five items are keyed in a positive direction so that responses can be added to calculate a total score, which ranges from 5-35. Pavot and Diener (2008) report that scores from 5 to 9 indicate that an individual is extremely dissatisfied with life, from 15 to 19 slightly dissatisfied with life, that a score of 20 indicates neutral life satisfaction, from 21 to 25 slight dissatisfied with life, from 26 to 30 satisfaction with life and from 31 to 35 extreme satisfaction with life. The test-retest reliability is 0.65. In validity the correlation of SwLS is excellent with Assistive Technology Device Predisposition Assessment (Spearman's r=0.89), Brief Symptom Inventory (Spearman's r=-0.64) and Life Satisfaction Questionnaire (LISAT-9-11) (Spearman's r=0.60).

Procedure

A field study was done where the researcher went to 3 faculties, i.e. Faculty of Applied Sciences, Faculty of management and Faculty of Commerce and Humanities. There a rapport was made and instructions were given to them. Once they were made to understand the instructions, both the tests were given to them. After the completion of the test students were thanked for their cooperation.

RESULTS

Table 1: subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction of total sample (N=60)

S No.	Subjective Happiness	Life Satisfaction
1	21	18
2	21	19
3	21	21
4	21	25
5	17	15
6	20	18
7	17	12
8	17	12
9	15	25
10	11	11
11	18	22
12	8	13
13	19	21
14	24	24
15	22	29
16	18	27
17	24	26
18	27	16
19	20	22
20	19	20
21	22	21
22	23	32
23	17	22
24	21	25

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S No.	Subjective Happiness	Life Satisfaction
25	18	25
26	18	27
27	28	30
28	28	29
29	17	16
30	20	20
31	21	14
32	14	28
33	21	30
34	18	21
35	19	30
36	17	27
37	21	24
38	28	21
39	24	28
40	25	31
41	18	20
42	21	21
43	24	24
44	16	23
45	11	23
46	21	30
47	26	19
48	18	19
49	22	29
50	21	32
51	20	25
52	20	25
53	27	25
54	16	17
55	19	22
56	25	19
57	21	18
58	26	26
59	25	26

S No.	Subjective Happiness	Life Satisfaction
60	26	21
Mean	20.38333333	22.68333333
Standard Deviation	4.210928746	5.277042272
Correlation	0.36480835	

Table I shows the Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction of the total sample of 60 students. From the table it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction, which further means that Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction are correlated, i.e. if the value of Subjective Happiness is increased, the value of Life Satisfaction will also increase.

Table 2.1: Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction in Females

S No.	Subjective Happiness	Life Satisfaction
1	21	18
2	21	19
3	21	21
4	21	25
5	17	15
6	20	18
7	17	12
8	17	12
9	15	25
10	11	11
11	22	21
12	23	32
13	17	22
14	21	25
15	18	25
16	18	27
17	28	30
18	28	29
19	17	16

S No.	Subjective Happiness	Life Satisfaction
20	20	20
21	18	20
22	21	21
23	24	24
24	16	23
25	11	23
26	21	30
27	26	19
28	18	19
29	22	29
30	21	32
Mean	19.7	22.1
Standard Deviation	4.009901538	5.779571634

The data shows the Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction of females. From the data one can conclude that they are satisfied with the life but not fully satisfied with the level of happiness in their life, as the mean for subjective happiness is 19.7 and for life satisfaction it is 22.1.

Table 2.2: Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction in Males

S No.	Subjective Happiness	Life Satisfaction
1	18	22
2	8	13
3	19	21
4	24	24
5	22	29
6	18	27
7	24	26
8	27	16
9	20	22
10	19	20
11	21	14
12	14	28

S No.	Subjective Happiness	Life Satisfaction
13	21	30
14	18	21
15	19	30
16	17	27
17	21	24
18	28	21
19	24	28
20	25	31
21	20	25
22	20	25
23	27	25
24	16	17
25	19	22
26	25	19
27	21	18
28	26	26
29	25	26
30	26	21
Mean	21.06666667	23.26666667
Standard Deviation	4.362325648	4.748381454

The data shows that male students are slightly satisfied with their level of subjective happiness and life satisfaction, as their mean value for the subjective happiness is 21.06 and for life satisfaction it is 23.26.

Following is the graphical representation for the Subjective happiness between genders

It can be concluded from the graph that male students scored more on subjective happiness as compared to female students. T score value for this scale was 1.263.
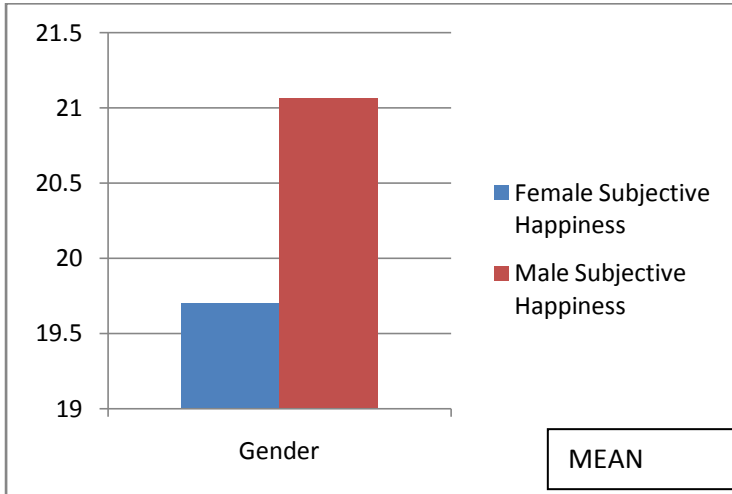
Following is the graphical representation for the Life Satisfaction between genders

It can be concluded that Life Satisfaction in male students is higher than the female students. T score value for this scale was 0.854.
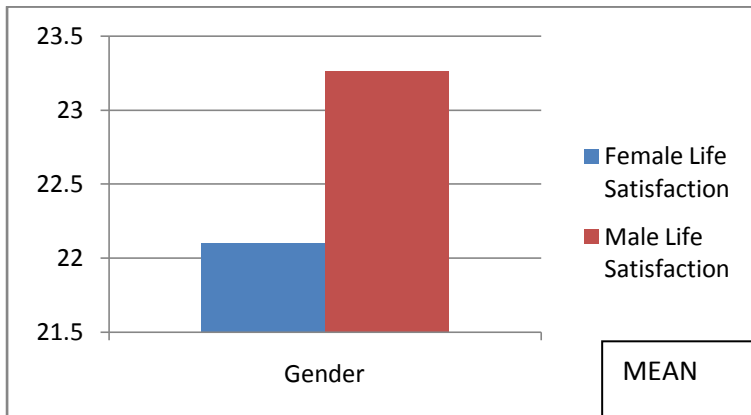
DISCUSSION

When people list the key characteristics of a good life, they are likely to include happiness and satisfaction from life. Therefore, when we look at well-being of a person, we are looking at the level of happiness and how satisfied that person is from his/her life. Although there are other measures too which define the well-being, but happiness

and the life satisfaction are the most important aspects human welfare. Happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being characterized by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. On the other hand, Life satisfaction is widely considered to be central aspect of human welfare. Life satisfaction is not merely a judgment about one's life. For it is widely thought to involve affirming, endorsing, appreciating or being pleased with one's life.

The first objective of the present study is to assess the relationship between Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction. For this purpose a sample of 60 students were taken from 3 different faculties. The results showed that the Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction are correlated; from this one can say that the change in the level of happiness can be seen in life satisfaction and vice versa.

Our second objective in the study was to see the gender difference in the level of subjective happiness and life satisfaction. Results showed that male students scored higher than the female students on both the scales. There can be many reasons for the low score of female participants, one of them is that social changes that have occurred over the past four decades have increased the opportunities available to women and a standard economic framework would suggest that these expanded opportunities for women would have increased their welfare. However, others have noted that with the expansion of opportunities have come costs and that men may have been the beneficiaries of the women's movement. In particular, many sociologists have argued that women's increased opportunities for market work have led to an increase in the total amount of work that women do. Arlie Hochschild's The Second Shift argued that women's movement into the paid labor force was not accompanied by a shift away from household production and they were thus now working a "second shift". Alternatively, women's lives have become more complex and their well-being now likely reflects their satisfaction with more facets of life compared with previous generations of women. For example, the reported happiness of women who are primarily homemakers might reflect their satisfaction with their home life to a

greater extent that women who are in both the labour force and have a family at home. For these latter women, reported happiness may reflect aggregating over their multiple domains. While this aggregation may lead to lower reported happiness, it is difficult to know whether this reflects a truly lower hedonic state.

LIMITATIONS

The data was not collected from all the sections of the society, in present research we are only focused on the students of the higher education so it may be not presenting the full view of the issue.

CONCLUSION

From the study being done the conclusions drawn is that there is a positive relation between Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction amongst the students. Amongst these students, male students were high on both the scales, i.e. on Subjective Happiness and Life Satisfaction. Furthermore, there are several factors which are helpful to understand happiness and life satisfaction,

- One of the most important influences is social relationships.
- Another factor that influences the people is work or school, or performance in an important role such as homemaker or grandparent.
- A third factor that influences the life satisfaction of most people is personal – satisfaction with the self, religious or spiritual life, learning and growth, and leisure.

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