

Happiness as Correlate of Positive Education among Teachers and Students

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ABSTRACT

Happiness is a mixture of pride, satisfaction, sense of effectiveness and value that arises when one has stretched self to achieve something one care about. It is a combination of life satisfaction and the balance of the frequency of positive and negative affect. In this regard, positive education program (Seligman et al., 2009) has been discovered which comprises the key elements viz., character strengths and virtues, resilience, happiness, interpersonal relationships for consistent wellbeing and success. Quality in education is generally applied to signify the positive and considerable inputs from teachers and students. In accordance with the concept, the present piece of work aimed at studying subjective and authentic happiness of teachers and students in higher education. The institutional case study approach was undertaken for assessing subjective and authentic happiness of teachers and students. The sample for the present study was taken from Maharishi Arvind College of Engineering and Research Centre, Sirsi Road, Jaipur on the purposive sampling basis. The Subjective Happiness Scale and Authentic Happiness Inventory were administered to the selected sample. The results pointed out that all the respondents of the present study were found quite happy with overall positive mood states as depicted by higher mean scores on both subjective and authentic happiness. The female teachers as well as students were found to be happier in comparison to their male counter parts. The students had higher mean scores for subjective happiness, whereas teachers had higher scores for authentic happiness.

Keywords: *Happiness, Positive Education, Subjective Happiness, Authentic Happiness*

Quality in higher education is generally applied to signify the quality of life or enlightened life styles, access to attainment of human rights and freedom, improvement of one's life chances and positive move, up gradation of satisfaction or position from good to better. It covers the quality of input such as students, faculty members, infra-structure and the process of education covering

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learning and extra-curriculum and community development activities and the quality of the output in terms of students and graduates (Holt, 2000; Kagia, 2005; Shah, 2009).

It has been evidenced that the students and teachers with the positive core qualities can be academically more motivated, well rounded and successful both in and outside the classroom. Moreover, there is a long-standing and widely accepted proposition that happiness represents the ultimate goal in life and the truest measure of wellbeing (Layard et al., 2013). In this regard, World Happiness Report (2013) projects mental illness to be one of the main causes of unhappiness along with poverty to unemployment to family breakdown to physical illness. But in any particular society, chronic mental illness is a highly influential cause and the single biggest determinant of misery. Moreover, the worldwide high prevalence of mental illnesses (WHO, 2013), the small rise in life satisfaction and the synergy between learning and positive emotion all argue that the skills for happiness should be taught in academic institutions.

Noticeably, positive psychology, a new branch of psychology that seeks to understand scientifically what makes humans perform exceptionally well, have greater wellbeing and happiness consistently through life and be more resilient to life's difficulties, aims at making a positive difference in the lives of people and motivates to thrive and perform at optimal levels. The goals of positive psychology mirror the goals of quality education. Positive psychology seeks to do the same by promoting the core elements in the form of positive education across the broader spectrum of individuals and institutions. In this regard, Martin Seligman, founder of the field of positive psychology is appreciated to begin the world's pioneering school to bolster good teaching practices as positive education program. The various skills that increase resilience, positive emotion, engagement and meaning can be taught to school children (Seligman et al., 2009). This new science has now discovered the concept of positive education which comprises of the key elements viz., character strengths and virtues, resilience, happiness, interpersonal relationships, etc. that produce consistent and long term wellbeing and success. Happiness is a mental state of wellbeing characterized by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. The most widely accepted definition is that of Diener and his colleagues, who prefer to use the label subjective wellbeing, defining it as a combination of life satisfaction (a cognitive judgment) and the balance of the frequency of positive and negative affect (hedonic tone) (Diener et al., 1991).

Objectives

- To find out the differences in the degrees of subjective and authentic happiness amongst teachers and students.

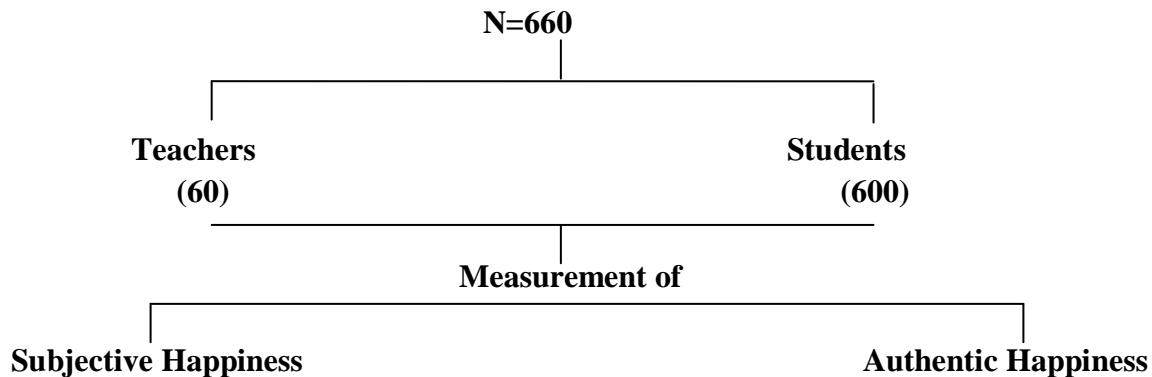
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Measures

- 1. Subjective Happiness scale (SHS):** The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) is a 4-item scale of global subjective happiness developed by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999). The SHS has been validated in 14 studies with a total of 2732 participants. Data has been collected in the United States from students on two college campuses and one high school campus, from community adults in two California cities and from older adults, as well as from students and community adults in Moscow, Russia. Results have indicated that the SHS has high internal consistency, which has been found to be stable across samples. Test-retest and self peer correlations have suggested good to excellent reliability and construct validation studies of convergent and discriminant validity have confirmed the use of this scale to measure the construct of subjective happiness.
- 2. Authentic Happiness Inventory (AHI):** Authentic Happiness Inventory is a 24 items scale of authentic happiness developed by Peterson and Seligman (2005). Each item requires an answer on a 5 point Likert scale which ranges from very much unlike me (1) to very much like me (5). Each item consists of five statements A to E which best describes the way one has felt for the last one month describing different approaches to happiness. It studies feelings of the individuals, and converges with existing measures of happiness, such as explanatory style and character strength. Higher scores are indicative of greater happiness. The alpha coefficient of reliability of the scale has been found to be 0.90 and a high test-retest reliability of 0.80 and the validity coefficient has been reported to be 0.90.

Research Design

Research design is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived, so as to obtain answers to the research questions and to control variance. The present study is descriptive and exploratory in nature. For this purpose, institutional case study approach was undertaken for processing the psychological profile of teachers of selected sample institution with regards to identified variables as they exist.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overall descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum score and range) were calculated for scores on Subjective and Authentic Happiness for the sample consisting of 60 teachers and 600 students.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation for Teachers N=60

HAPPINESS	Mean Score	S D
Subjective Happiness	20.18	3.85
Authentic Happiness	99.97	8.60

Table 1. depicts the mean and standard deviation values for happiness of teachers where mean score and standard deviation for subjective happiness are found to be 20.18 and 3.85 respectively, whereas the mean score and standard deviation for authentic happiness are found to 99.97 and 8.60 respectively. The result reveals the overall happy mood state of teachers as depicted by higher mean scores on both subjective and authentic happiness.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation for Students N=600

HAPPINESS	Mean Score	S D
Subjective Happiness	22.85	2.81
Authentic Happiness	92.30	8.95

Table 2. shows the mean and standard deviation values for happiness of students where mean and standard deviations are found to be 22.85 and 2.81 respectively for subjective happiness whereas mean and standard deviation for authentic happiness is 92.30 and 8.95 respectively. The result reveals the overall happiness of students as depicted by the higher mean scores.

Table 3. Mean, S D, Status of Normality and P Value for Female and Male Teachers

HAPPINESS	FEMALE		MALE		NORMALITY	TEST	P VALUE
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD			
Subjective Happiness	24.60	2.52	17.98	2.09	YES	t—TEST	.000**
Authentic Happiness	103.00	11.57	98.45	6.30	NO	MWU TEST	.188

** Significant at the 0.01 level

*Significant at the 0.05 level

The mean scores of subjective and authentic happiness were tested for normality and the mean score was found not normally distributed for authentic happiness but for subjective happiness the data was found normally distributed. Accordingly used Mann-Whitney U (MWU) Test and t-test for the purpose revealed that the mean scores of subjective happiness were found significantly different whereas no significant difference was found between the mean scores of authentic

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happiness. The data reveals that the female teachers were found to be happier in comparison to their male counter parts.

Graph 1: Comparison of Male and Female Teachers on Happiness

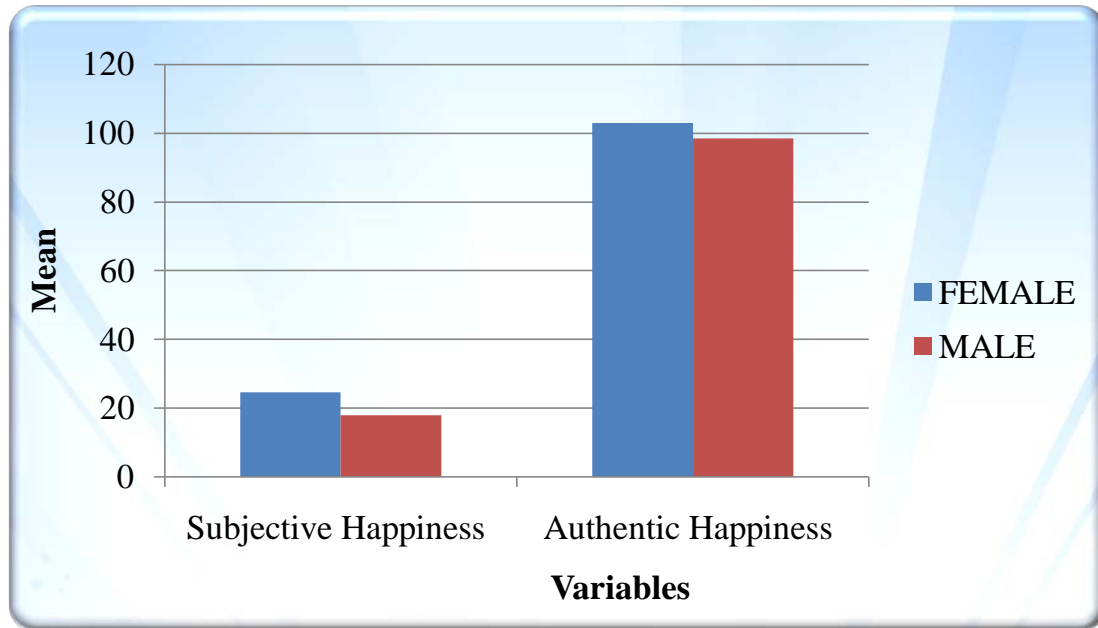


Table 4. Mean, S D, Status of Normality and P Value Female and Male Students

HAPPINESS	FEMALE		MALE		NORMALITY	TEST	P VALUE
	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.			
Subjective Happiness	24.15	2.328	22.20	2.810	NO	MWU	.000**
Authentic Happiness	98.12	9.287	89.39	7.198	NO	MWU	.000**

** Significant at the 0.01 level *Significant at the 0.05 level

The data was not normally distributed for the happiness; therefore the Mann-Whitney U Test was used for the purpose. The mean scores of subjective happiness and authentic happiness of male and female students were found to be significantly different depicted by p-value derived from Mann-Whitney U Test. The female students were found to be happier than the male students.

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Graph 2: Comparison of Male and Female students on Happiness

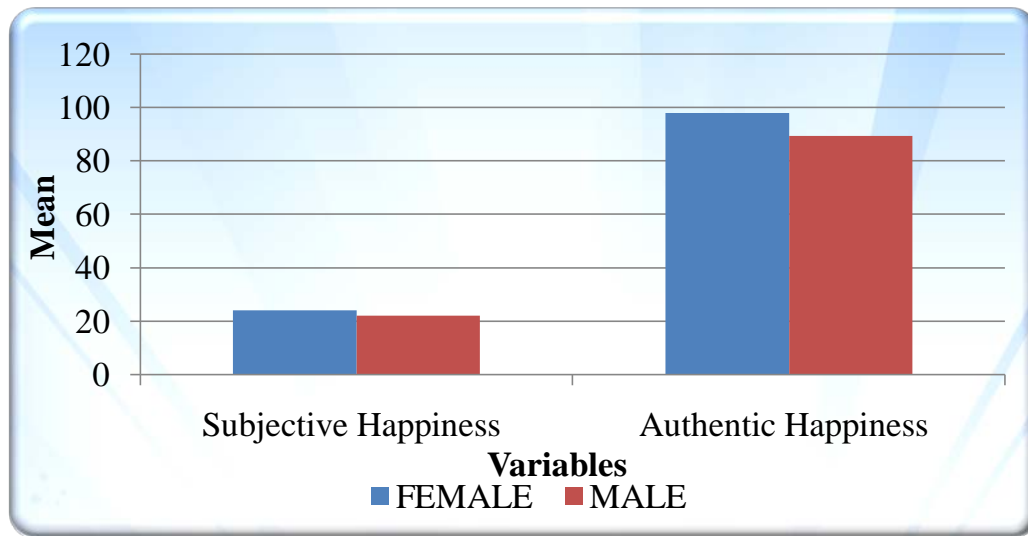


Table 5. Mean, S D, Status of Normality and P Value Students and Teachers

HAPPINESS	STUDENTS		TEACHERS		NORMALITY	TEST	P VALUE
	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.			
Subjective Happiness	22.85	2.812	20.18	3.855	NO	MWU TEST	.000**
Authentic Happiness	92.30	8.951	99.97	8.604	NO	MWU TEST	.000**

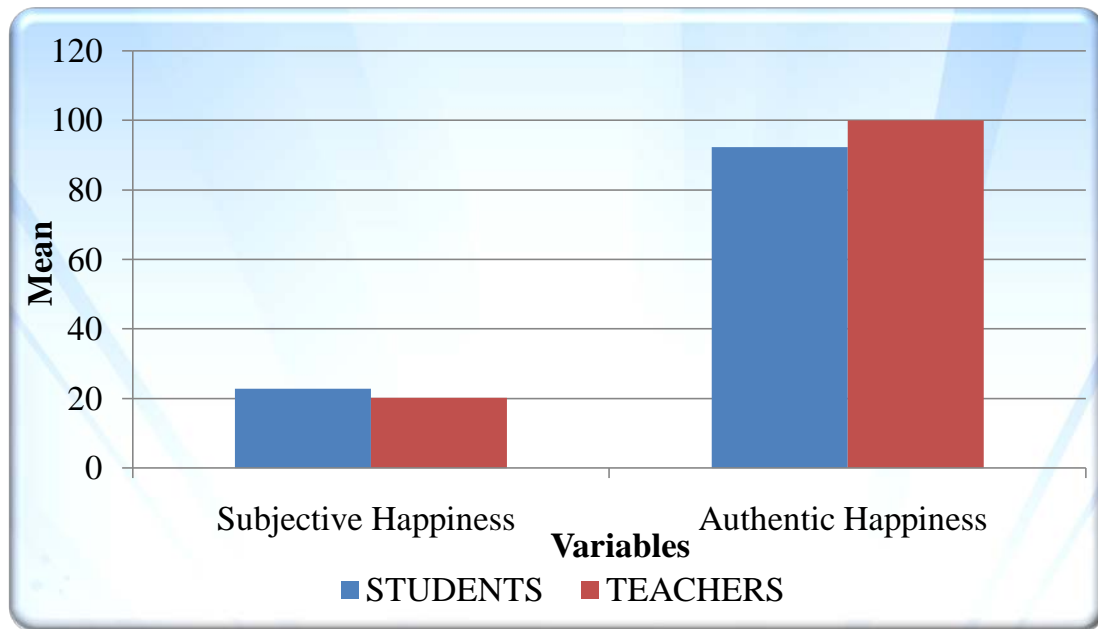
** Significant at the 0.01 level

*Significant at the 0.05 level

The data was not normally distributed for the happiness; therefore the Mann-Whitney U Test was used for the purpose. The mean scores of subjective happiness and authentic happiness of teachers and students were found to be significantly different depicted by p-value derived from Mann-Whitney U Test. The students had higher mean scores for subjective happiness than their teachers, whereas teachers had higher mean scores for authentic happiness than their students as also depicted by the graphical representation.

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Graph 3: Comparison of students and teachers on Happiness



CONCLUSION

The results reveal the strong evidence for the existence of happiness as correlate of positive education as a concept in the selected sample case.

1. All the respondents of the present study were found quite happy with overall positive mood states as depicted by higher mean scores on both subjective and authentic happiness.
2. The female teachers as well as students were found to be happier in comparison to their male counter parts.
3. The students had higher mean scores for subjective happiness, whereas teachers had higher scores for authentic happiness.

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Conflict of Interests: The author declared no conflict of interests.

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