

Relationship between Happiness and Achievement Motivation: A Case of University Students

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Abstract

This survey carried out to identify the relationship between happiness and achievement motivation among girls and boys students. 50 (25 girls and 25 boys) MA psychology students were selected randomly. The students answered the same questionnaire including Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) and Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ) (Helmreich). Pearson correlation coefficient test and independent T-test were used to analyze the data. Results showed that there is a significant relationship between happiness and achievement motivation in reliability level of 95% among the girl and boy students and there is no difference between happiness and achievement motivation in reliability level of 95% among girl and boy students.

Key Word: Emotion, happiness, motivation, achievement motivation, university students

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Introduction

Emotion is the main element of our personality. It adds color to our reactions to environment and impresses our perception. Hyper-emotion and lack of emotion are both symptomatic. We learn to explain our emotions with certain word such as, gladness, happiness, glee, and sorrow to share them with our significant others (Hassanzadeh , 2009). Among positive emotions, happiness drew various researchers' attention to itself . Since we know happiness, motivates individual activities, raises awareness, strengthens creativity and facilitates social relationships, so happiness is the important key in educational system & achievement motivation (Talebzadeh & Samkan, 2011). In fact emotion has a significant relationship with motivation, it is the motivation which energies and directs the person's behavior. Achievement motivation is the person's tendency to achieve special goals. This kind of motivation is associated with special goals and ways of achieving them, planning, effort, and feelings of self-worth (Ghasemi,et al. 2011). This paper intends to identify the relationship between happiness and achievement motivation among girls and boys students.

Happiness

Webster's Dictionary defines happiness as, "an agreeable feeling or condition of the soul arising from good fortune or propitious happening of any kind; the possession of those circumstances or that state of being which is attended enjoyment; the state of being happy; contentment; joyful satisfaction; felicity; blessedness." The term happiness captures a huge variety of positive emotional responses, including such things as cheerfulness, serenity, optimism, and joy. Argil (2001) states that happiness consists of three basic components: "positive affection, "life satisfaction" and " Negative affection ". In Aristotle's theory of happiness:

- a. Happiness is the ultimate end and purpose of human existence
- b. Happiness is not pleasure, nor is it virtue. It is the exercise of virtue.
- c. Happiness cannot be achieved until the end of one's life. Hence it is a goal and not a temporary state.
- d. Happiness is the perfection of human nature. Since man is a rational animal, human happiness depends on the exercise of his reason.

- e. Happiness depends on acquiring a moral character, where one displays the virtues of courage, generosity, justice, friendship, and citizenship in one's life. These virtues involve striking a balance or "mean" between an excess and a deficiency.
- f. Happiness requires intellectual contemplation, for this is the ultimate realization of our rational capacities (Narrated by White, 2006).

Carr, (2004) believes that happiness is understandable, based upon relevant concepts of positive feelings like happiness and enjoy. It is obvious that all people could not explain their happiness in a single and special way. It is possible to explain happiness with different experiences like a warm internal feeling, successful feeling, coordination feeling and internal calmness, a joyful experience and reduction or lack of any problems. The joyful environment will affect learning and glorifying of talents among students and will double their energy (Al-Yasin, 2001). Eyesenck describes happiness in a Stable Exterior Sign. He believes that positive affection in happiness is related with easy social relations in the format of a natural and satisfying relation. (Sadeghi, 2006). Schumaker, (2009) writes in his book under title of "What is happiness?" All efforts for happiness show that happiness could bear a lot of forms with various viewpoints such as: Satisfaction level of life, Health & positive thought, active & constructive welfare, suitable life quality, its meaning, optimistic, interest success, self-confidence, enjoyment, finding reality and so on. Fredrickson (1998) stated that Happiness and cheerfulness are a part of satisfaction which may cause more plays and amusements with better possibilities for development of bodily, social and mental skills.

Martin Seligman (2002) suggested a "happiness equation": $H = S + C + V$ (Happiness = Set individual range + Circumstances of life + Voluntary controllable factors) in which temperament and environment limit happiness and that certain actions accrue happiness.

Set range/genetics: There is some evidence to support that we are all born with a certain "set-point" of happiness determined by our genes. This is supposed to change only slightly, if at all, as we get older. This contributes towards around 50% of our level of happiness.

Circumstances: There is also some evidence to suggest that the circumstance we live in influence our level of happiness. You don't always have a lot of control over your circumstances (for example, we can't all live in mansions and drive new cars). Evidence suggests, however, that this accounts for only around 8-15% of our happiness levels, which really isn't that much.

Voluntary Control: This third factor is the most important factor in the equation because you can control it and in the process control your happiness. It includes all aspects of your life over which you have a relatively high degree of control including your thoughts and actions. This includes the way you choose to think about and act on the past, present, and future and seems to have quite a significant impact on how happy you are - if you do the math, it could be up to 42%!

Past: When thinking about the past, people who are happier pay attention to what is 'good' about the past rather than focusing on the unhappy times. They are grateful, forgiving, and don't believe that the past will determine what happens in the future.

Future: When it comes to thinking about the future, happy people are flexibly optimistic - what this means is that they are optimistic (in a realistic sense) about how their future is going to be but if it doesn't turn out that way, they know it's not going to be the end of the world either.

Present: The way you think about and act in the present is also essential in determining how happy you are. This might include things such as taking pleasure in life and your surroundings, building and being in meaningful relationships, and the way we react to things in life, both good and bad.

Seligman (2003) also provides the acronym PERMA to summarize Positive Psychology's correlational findings; humans seem happiest when they have:

- a. Pleasure (tasty foods, warm baths, etc.),
- b. Engagement (or flow, the absorption of an enjoyed yet challenging activity),
- c. Relationships (social ties have turned out to be extremely reliable indicator of happiness),
- d. Meaning (a perceived quest or belonging to something bigger), and
- e. Accomplishments (having realized tangible goals)

Motivation & Achievement Motivation

Motivation is a desire to accomplish a goal or a drive to carry out a specific behavior (Graham, 2004; Weiner, 2000). Motivation is a desire to succeed a goal which is meaningful to individual (Cladella, 2002). Motivation tries to explain the reason why people decide to do something, with which decision they go after their willingness, and how long they are willing. Achievement motivation is the person's tendency to achieve special goals. This kind of motivation is associated with special

goals and ways of achieving them, planning, effort, and feelings of self-worth (Barkhori, 2008). First time, Murray (1938) argued Achievement motive scientifically as a need. He brought up several needs, some biological and some mental, for human beings. Achievement motive is a social need including overcoming barriers, achieving high standards, competing with others and overtaking them (Hasanzadeh, 2009). Motivation is one of the theories of "achievement motivation" proposed by Atkinson expectancy-value theory in essence. This theory of motivation focuses on the process to explain the need for achievement and fear of failure (Brophy, 1998). Achievement motivation can be defined as making good business or the orientation to the actions which is important to compel with the perfect standards (Narrated by Aydın and Coşkun, 2011). The important issue in achievement motive is the progress according to the student's performance targets. The achievements of the students about the course are usually determined by the scores in examinations and the passing notes in class. Achievement motivation indicates using all his time and energy to achieve the standard objectives set before (Baykara, 1999). Achievement motivation differences between high and low of the persons shown in Table1 (Aydm & Coskun, 2011).

Table 1

Achievement motivation differences between high and low for those

Learns to be learned.	Works appear to have learned.
Put purposes in middle difficulties.	Put purposes too easy or too difficult.
Qualification feelings have been developed.	Qualification feelings have not been developed.
Makes installation to the effort.	Makes installation to the external factors.
It tries to overcome the difficulties encountered.	Barely be in defeat when faced difficulty.

Many researches have been done about Happiness. Gatab, et al.(2011) conducted a study about "The relationship between psychological health, happiness and life quality in the students". the results show that there is a significant relationship between psychological health ,happiness and life quality. The students whose psychological health is higher, are happier and will have higher life quality. Moltafet, et al. (2010) in their research named "Personality traits, religious orientation and happiness" revealed that Extraversion, and Intrinsic religious orientation were positive predictors of happiness, in contrast to Neuroticism which predicted happiness negatively. Pishva,et al.(2011) in their research expressed that there was a positive direct relation between extraversion and happiness; and a negative direct relation

between neuroticism and psychoticism with happiness. The results in Ostadian's research (2011) showed that there was a significant relationship between happiness and mental health. Alimoradi, et al.(2011) in their research found that Generally, happiness rate and activity level of BAS (behavioral activity system) in males group is more than females group, but females group were more active in BIS (behavioral inhibition system) and FFS (fight- flight system). The results show that happiness rate is increased by more active BAS. In Jalali Farahani's research (2011), The results indicated that there was a significant difference between exercise and happiness in general and its dimensions including life satisfaction, self-esteem, control and comfort as well as effectiveness. Qodsi in his research (2009) showed that Happiness may cause more efficiency. Happiness may cause little mistakes and better thinking and functions. Also it may cause freshness in management and leadership and betterment of regulations and rules in a calm environment. A happy manager may be more successful than a serious and unhappy one. In his studies, Zernike (2001) found that students who voluntarily participated in school activities achieved higher scores and were then happier. According to a study on %10 of happiest people in a college, Seligman (2003) noticed that the special characteristic of them is benefiting from a powerful and social life. Okun, et. al. (1984) showed that combination of happiness and health is %32. Happiness has a critical and important role in motivation of students. This is because it is effective in reducing of depression and stress of students from one side and their interests in school and studying along with self confidence, safety and life satisfaction on the other (Naghieb Zadeh, 1998). Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith, 1999 believe that happiness rate is equal in males and females. But considering depression, it is a bit difficult; that is, despite the equal happiness in males and females, females are more depressed than males. Diener et al. argued that females experience both negative affection and positive affection more than males and its outcome will be equal for happiness in males and females. Inglehart studies (1990), including about 170,000 respondents from 16 different countries, show negligible difference between males and females happiness. Paezi et al.(2006), found that adolescents who experience high happiness and welfare are more active in academic performance and have higher achievement. Abbasianfard (2010) in his research showed that there was a significant relationship between the four aspects of self-efficacy (self-monitoring, self-regulation, self- stimulation, self-belief) and achievement motivation. But there was no significant relationship between self evaluation of self- efficacy and achievement motivation. The results in Talebpour's research (2002) indicated that cognitive training had a significant effect on increasing the degree of internal locus of Control, and achievement motivation scores for the experimental group, but its effect on their academic performance has not reached the

significant level. Ghafouri, et al. (2008) noted that individuals who have high achievement motive will be successful in competitive jobs. On the other hand, in these jobs high achievement motive and the need to communicate others for good competition with them increase job satisfaction in them. Shaver and Scott, 1991 reviewed a research in which achievement motive was used as a valid predictor for entrepreneurship. They concluded that there is a positive correlation between achievement motive and entrepreneurship. McClelland (1985), in a preliminary research, asked a group of male scholars to write short stories about TET pictures. Researchers instructed each group differently and persuaded need to high-level achievement in one group and need to low-level achievement in the other group. Results showed that stories written under high-level achievement, mentioned highly about predominance tendency to being successful, performing well, participating in social and academic activities and showed more possibility about attending the university, cheating on a test and better physical health.

As shown in research History, in spite the researches on happiness and achievement motive in abroad, no researches have been carried out in Iran. In some researches, relationship of each variable with other variable was studied; but no research was carried out (or is not available) on analyzing both variables. Thus, the study is important and required to fill the information gap of the relationship between these two variables. Since achievement motive plays an important role in humans, especially among university students, to reach their goals, main goal of this research is studying the relationship between predictor variable, happiness, and criterion variable, achievement motive, among students of Islamic Azad University of Sari to provide strategies to increase happiness in university students and therefore increase achievement motive among them if there is any significant relationship between predictor variable (happiness) and criterion variable (achievement motive). The present survey has been carried to study this question: Is there any relationship between happiness and achievement motive? In other words, in this study, following hypotheses have been examined:

H1: There is a relationship between happiness and achievement motive in girls.

H2: There is a relationship between happiness and achievement motive in boys.

H3: Happiness is different among girl and boy students.

H4: Achievement motive is different among girl and boy students.

Method

Statistic population of research concludes MA students of Islamic Azad University of Sari, Humanities Faculty, studying General, Clinical and Educational psychology in second semester 90-91. Totally, 50 students (25 males and 25 females) completed happiness questionnaire (Oxford) and achievement motive questionnaire (Helmreich). The students were selected randomly.

Research Instrument was "Oxford Happiness Questionnaire" including 29 items and students were asked to choose a statement best show their feeling. Another instrument was "Helmreich Achievement Motive Questionnaire" including 19 items rated on a 5 point Likert type Scale ranging from 1) Strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) neutral, 4) disagree, and 5) strongly disagree. The instrument was used to measure students' achievement motive and its results were used in the present study.

Results

To use the result of happiness and achievement motive questionnaires for statistical test, scores of each item in the questionnaires were add up separately and each ratio was calculated. Pearson coefficient test and independent T-test were used as statistical tests to analyze data for the result of total research hypothesis. Table 2 shows the relationship between happiness and achievement motive among girl students. According the results, there is no relationship between happiness and achievement motive among girl students.

Table 2
Brief data analysis of H1

Statistical Index variables	N	t_{cal}	t_{cr}	df	α
	25	0.09422	0.039	23	$p < 0.05$

Since correlation coefficient ($r = 0.094$) with degree of freedom ($df = 23$) and significance level of 95 percent ($\alpha=0.05$) is more than critical coefficient ($r=0.039$), H_0 is rejected and research hypotheses is approved. Therefore, there is a relationship between happiness and achievement motive among boy students.

Table 3 shows if there is a relationship between happiness and achievement motive among boy students. According the results, there is a relationship between happiness and achievement motive among boy students.

Table 3
Brief data analysis of H2

Statistical Index variables	N	t_{cal}	t_{cr}	df	α
	25	1.06	0.039	23	$p < 0.05$

Since correlation coefficient ($r = 1.06$) with degree of freedom ($df=21$) and significance level of 95 percent ($\alpha=5\%$) is more than critical coefficient ($r=0.039$), H_0 is rejected and research hypotheses is approved. And therefore, there is a relationship between happiness and achievement motive among boy students.

Table 4 shows the difference of happiness levels among girl and boy students. According the results, there is a relationship between happiness and achievement motive among boy students.

Table 4
Brief data analysis of H3

Statistical Index variables	N	SD	t_{cal}	t_{cr}	Df	α
	50	8.83	1.2307	2	48	$p < 0.05$

Since T ($t_{cal}=1.23$) with degree of freedom ($df=48$) and significance level of 95 percent ($\alpha=5\%$) is less than critical t ($t_{cr}=2$), H_0 is approved and research hypotheses is rejected. Therefore, there is no difference between happiness level among girl and boy students.

Table 5 shows the difference of achievement motive levels among girl and boy students. According the results, there is no difference between achievement motive levels among girl and boy students.

Table 5
Brief data analysis of H3

Statistical Index variables	N	SD	t_{cal}	t_{cr}	df	α
	50	7.50	%64	2	48	$p < 0.05$

Since T ($t_{cal}=\%64$) with degree of freedom ($df=48$) and significance level of 95 percent ($\alpha=5\%$) is less than critical t ($t_{cr}=2$), H_0 is approved and research hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is no difference between achievement motive level among girl and boy students.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this research, results of "Oxford" 29-item questionnaire and "Helmreich" questionnaire were analyzed considering girl and boy students. Oxford questionnaire and Helmreich questionnaire included items about happiness and achievement motive, respectively. These questionnaires measured happiness and achievement motive levels in students in similar conditions. The findings showed a relationship between happiness and achievement motive among the students. Some students gained higher scores in 29 items of happiness questionnaire and 19 items of achievement motive questionnaire but scores differences of happiness and achievement motive were insignificant among girl and boy students. These findings approved the research hypothesis that is, there is a relationship between happiness and achievement motive among girl and boy students; but rejected other research hypotheses on the difference between happiness and achievement motive among girl and boy students.

Generally, Motivation helps people to be successful & happy, as well as When people are motivated by happiness, they are likely to experience a fulfilling life. They will be motivated to continuously work for things that will make them happy. Motivation inspires people to progress and progression will help to make people happy, especially if they working toward things that make them happy, so motivation lead to happiness in life.

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