



Happiness and perceived self acceptance among women of Varanasi

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Abstract

The idea of happiness varies among people and had been given several definitions over the decades. Many variable have been accounted for the reason of happiness among people, one such variable is perceived self-acceptance. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between happiness and perceived self-acceptance among women of Varanasi city, an online survey was conducted in which 93 women participated having age range of 18-30 years. A survey method of research was used and data was collected using Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and Perceived Self-Acceptance scale. The test results confirmed that there is a positive correlation between happiness and perceived self-acceptance, there lies no significant difference between the self-acceptance of financially dependent and financially independent women also there is no significant difference in the happiness among women living in rural and urban area.

Keywords: acceptance among women, rural and urban area

Introduction

Psychology is characterised by a particularly strong focus on happiness and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001) [27]. Despite the fact that for long of the 20th century, the study of happiness and wellness was eclipsed by efforts to end suffering and curtail psychopathology. Happiness is a state of emotion in which human beings tend to express positive feelings (Sundriyal and Kumar, 2014) [30]. People typically show positive emotions when they are happy, which is a state of emotion (Sundriyal and Kumar, 2014) [30]. When a person experiences less anxiety, guilt, wrath, fear, and hostility, they are seen to be joyful (Michalos, 2017) [20]. Joy, a type of happiness, can be found in every category of "underlying" human emotions. Happiness is inherent to the life experiences, and most people experience it frequently, if not all the time (Diener & Diener, 1996) [10]. Numerous definitions of happiness have been offered by philosophers and social scientists. The Hedonic Approach and the Eudaimonic Approach are two perspectives on happiness (Szentagotai and David, 2013) [31]. According to the hedonic perspective, happiness can be attained through material possessions and achieving one's goals. The Eudaimonic perspective contends that happiness results from carrying out morally righteous and virtuous deeds (Gorsy and Panwar 2016) [14, 15].

There is no question that man desired happiness above all other objectives in life, according to Freud (1930–1961), who defined happiness as the pinnacle of excellence in the art of living. Happiness, according to Alton and Dudley (1987), is the capacity to take pleasure in experiences while also feeling a certain amount of excitement. Similar to this, Argyle, Martin, and Crosland (1989) [2] held that happiness is made up of three interrelated elements: pleasure with life in general, lack of negative effects, and good affects. Due to the fact that it results in meaningful and satisfying lives, the successful pursuit of happiness is essential to life satisfaction. Mental wellness depends on self-acceptance. Lack of the capacity for unconditional acceptance of oneself can result in a range of emotional problems, such as

unrestrained rage and sadness. The individual who is preoccupied with self-evaluation rather than self-acceptance may also be extremely needy and may invest a lot of time and energy into self-aggrandizement in an effort to make up for perceived weaknesses. In terms of a notion, self-acceptance means accepting yourself for who you are right now, regardless of your past. Self-understanding and a realistic assessment of one's strengths and flaws are necessary for an individual to feel satisfied with his or her overall well-being. One of the essential components of contentment and independence from repressed emotions and neurotic being, according to Roger (1947), is total acceptance. There are various theories surrounding self-acceptance, which provides compelling evidence to support this idea.

Literature Review

Happiness among women

There is no discernible difference between the happiness of working and non-working women, according to a study by Gahtori and Rawat (2020) on 202 non-working and working Indian women. Housewives are happier than working women, according to a different study by Sato (2021) on Japanese women. Despite the fact that the results were influenced by the number of kids these women have. In order to determine the level of happiness among working and unemployed women in three different nations, Torosyan and Pignatti (2020) [32] did a study. They discovered three distinct findings from their research. In comparison to the non-working group, there was a sizable and negative disparity for working women in Armenia and a lesser negative difference for working women in Azerbaijan. There was no such difference for Georgia.

Self-Acceptance among women

In their study of 100 working and non-working women, Rathore and Mertia (2020) [26] found that working women have better levels of self-acceptance than their non-working counterparts.

According to Monica O’Kelly’s (2013) study on self-acceptance in women, cultural role, societal norms, and gender roles have a significant impact on this factor. Where women are treated equally to men and have different tasks, self-acceptance is strong. Women who have higher levels of self-acceptance are more likely to become resilient and tough.

Self-Acceptance and Happiness

In their study on the relationship between self-acceptance and happiness, Szentagotai and David (2018) discovered a positive correlation between self-acceptance and happiness as well as its many other companions.

Another study by Chamberlain and Haaga (2001) [6] on 107 people with ages ranging from 19 to 81 showed a favourable link between happiness and unconditional self-acceptance (USA). They said that participants from the USA had higher levels of happiness and lower rates of anxiety and sadness.

In a study Bernard *et al.* (2013) [3] conducted on young people, they noted that when people are free of anxiety and depression, self-acceptance can help them find new interests that will make them happier and more fulfilled. They added that educators should teach student that self-acceptance is essential for their happiness and success.

Happiness in rural and urban areas

In order to determine the gradient of urban-rural happiness, Berry and Kozaryn (2011) [4] performed a study using data collected between 1972 and 2008. They discovered that those in big cities are the least happy, whereas those who live in rural areas are significantly happier than those who live in cities. Numerous elements, including size, density, and homogeneity, have an impact on the outcome here. They also claimed that happiness was not one of the advantages of living in a big city.

According to a study by Burger *et al.* (2020) [5] on the disparities between urban and rural happiness around the world, people in cities are significantly happier than people in rural areas. The highest level of happiness is caused by excellent living conditions and greater economic possibilities.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a positive correlation between happiness and self-acceptance.
2. Women who are financially independent will have higher self-acceptance than those who are financially dependent.
3. Women who are financially independent will have higher level of happiness than those who are financially dependent.
4. There will be a significant difference between the level of happiness among women living in rural and urban areas.
5. There will be a significant difference between the level of self-acceptance among women living in rural and urban areas.

Methodology

Sample

The sample of the study include women participants from Varanasi city, having an age range of 18-30 years with minimum qualification of graduation. 106 women participants participated in the survey out of which only 93 responses were included in the final study as there were some missing responses in the rest of the data. Out of the 93 women 40 were financially independent (both part time and full time were included) while rest 53 were financially dependent women. The participants belonged to both rural and urban background.

Procedure

The study was conducted in Varanasi, the participants were contacted via online mode like social media, they were given brief about the study and those who agreed to participate in the study were sent consent form and after that they were sent the questionnaire via email after receiving the data the participants were thanked for their participation.

Tools

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire

The scale was developed by Argyle and Hills in the year 2002. It is a 6 point likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The questionnaire consists of 29 items. Out of these 29 items 17 items are positive items while remaining 12 are negative items. Positive items are rated from 1 to 6 and to score the negative items the scores are converted i.e. 1 is 6 while 6 is 1. The total score one get is divided by 29 in order to get the final score. Lowest score one can achieve is 1 which indicate Not Happy and highest is 6 which means Too Happy. The questions for example are as follows: “I feel that life is very rewarding” and “I laugh a lot”.

The Perceived Self-Acceptance scale

The Perceived Self-Acceptance scale was developed by Brock, Sarason, Sanghvi and Gurung in the year 1998. It is a 5 point likert scale, ranges from 1 to 5 where 1 stands for Strongly Disagree and 5 stands for Strongly Agree. The questionnaire consists of 44 questions catogrised into PAS Friends (12 items), PAS Mother (12 items), PAS Father (10 items) and PAS Family (10 items). Out of these 44 items 25 are positive items while 19 are negative items. The positive items are scored 1 to 5 while negative items are scored 5 to 1. The question example are as follows “I am very important part of the lives of my friends”, and “My mother has disappointed me on many occasions”.

Research Design

The following research has survey research design

Result

Table 1: Correlation between Happiness and Perceived Self-Acceptance

	PAS	PAS Friend	PAS Mother	PAS Family	PAS Father	Happiness
PAS	1					0.499**
PAS Friend		1				0.560**
PAS Mother			1			0.283**
PAS Family				1		0.364**
PAS Father					1	0.373**
Happiness	0.499**	0.560**	0.283**	0.364**	0.373**	1

PAS; Perceived Self-Acceptance **. Significant at the 0.01 level.

There exists a positive correlation between happiness and perceived self-acceptance which indicate that those who have high level of perceived self-acceptance i.e. the perception of individuals that other accept them for who they are will be more happy than those who has less PAS, from the table we can conclude that there exists highest correlation between the scores of happiness and friends while happiness and PAS mother has least correlation.

Table 2: Significant difference among financially dependent and financially independent women

Variable	Financially Dependent		Financially Independent		t- value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Perceived Self-Acceptance	160.0667	21.89	166.31	21.71	1.307

The above table shows that there is no significant difference between self -acceptance of financial dependent and financially independent women. Therefore perceived self-acceptance among women does not depend on the whether they are earning or relying on others for their financial needs.

Table 3: Mean and SD of women having rural and urban background based on scores of perceived self-acceptance (PAS)

Variable	Rural		Urban		t- value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Perceived Self-Acceptance	166.48	18.70	162.50	23.66	.216

The above table shows that there is no significant difference between perceived self -acceptance of women living in rural or urban area which indicate that socio-demographic background does not affect the level of PAS.

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations for financially dependent and financially independent women based on scores of happiness.

Variable	Financially Dependent		Financially Independent		t- value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Happiness	124.31	18.78	126.78	19.12	.596

The above table shows that there is no significant difference between happiness of financial dependent and financially independent women. Therefore happiness among women does not depend on the whether they are earning or relying on others for their financial needs.

Table 5: Mean and SD of women having rural and urban background based on scores of happiness.

Variable	Rural		Urban		t- value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Happiness	125.02	18.22	125.01	19.28	.003

The above table shows that there is no significant difference between Happiness of women living in rural or urban area which indicate that socio-demographic background does not affect the level of happiness among women.

Discussion

Women in this era play many different roles, from being homemakers to working professionals, so being aware of their strengths and weaknesses becomes essential for coping

with their extensive life activities. Self-acceptance and confidence then allow them to embrace their conscious concept of themselves. The findings suggest a link between happiness and women's perceptions of their own self-acceptance. When the results were analysed on a dimension-by-dimension basis, it was shown that women scored higher on PAS friends, indicating that they feel more accepted by their friends and believe that they won't criticise them, both of which have a favourable impact on their sense of happiness. Additionally, it was discovered that having financial independence has no negative effects on respondents' levels of happiness or PAS. The reason for obtaining the following results is that happiness is not only based on the finance but various other factors like number of children, support from partner and organization and this study does not cover all these factors. The findings also demonstrated that happiness is a personal experience that is not influenced by where we live, which explains why there was no discernible variation in happiness levels between women from rural and urban backgrounds. The breadth of our understanding of self-acceptance, its correlations, and its advantages can give us a solid foundation for fostering it in both ourselves and other people. Today's women face several challenges in their chosen fields, whether they are students or working professionals. Given their inherited propensity to do so, they will each try to handle it differently. Therefore, a woman's decision-making process is influenced by the way she typically processes information that is pertinent to herself and handles her own difficulties. As a result, self-acceptance empowers modern women to go beyond the bounds of their self-definition, uphold personal values, and manage identity challenges. It entails accepting one's body, shielding oneself from criticism, and having faith in one's abilities (Pillay, 2016).

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