Predicting Self-Efficacy Based on Happiness among Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University Students, Iran

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Abstract

The present study tries to predict self-efficacy based on happiness and the subscales of that. An analytic cross-sectional study, the population included male and female students studying at Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University, Tehran, during the educational year 2012-2011. 326 students (male=165, female=161) were selected through random and multistep cluster sampling. Sherer et al's Self-Efficacy questionnaire (SGSES) was used to measure participants' self-efficacy. Oxford Happiness questionnaire (OHS) was also used to measure participants' happiness. The findings showed a positive and significant relationship between happiness and the subscales and self-efficacy. Happiness and its subscales also significantly predicted self-efficacy.

Keywords

happiness, life satisfaction, self- efficacy

1. Introduction

In today's world, university students make a significant and large part of the societies. They are influenced by different aspects of life including happiness (Rinoldze & Miller, 2003). Happiness is one of the basic concepts and components of individuals' lives particularly university students. Many branches of psychology try to understand and facilitate that in people's lives. Issues related to university students' mental health and care have been more attended to in recent decades. It should be pointed that university years are among stressful periods in people's lives due to multiple factors and so it is necessary to identify the factors and constructs contributing to mental care enhancement among university students. Positive psychologists have tries to direct their attention toward potential resources of positive feeling such as happiness. Harris (cited in Alipoor & Agah, 2007) believes that happiness decreases tension perception and increases one's abilities for work and activity. According to the previous findings, happiness is better explained and surveyed in the presence of cognitive evaluation of life satisfaction which includes the components of self-esteem (Mazlow, 1970), sense of control (Ratter,

1966), optimism, and goals achievement. In line with development of positive psychology in recent years, studying happiness has been always a central issue in this realm. Sconikton et al (1997) and Winhoven (1994) define happiness as an attribute including the criteria of situational stability and internal cause. Plato knows happiness as the balance between three elements involving reasoning, emotion, and desires (Dikey, 1999). Aristotle considers happiness as the spiritual life. Although scientific study on happiness and measuring it began in 1960s in psychology, specific attention has been directed toward that in recent years (Seligman et al., 2005) and it is to the extent that some researchers consider the goal of positive psychology as happiness enhancement.

Self-efficacy is on the other hand a factor really influencing individuals' functioning. Those with higher self-efficacy take into account more and wider working possibilities, are more successful in their job, achieve higher grades at the university, choose superior personal goals, and benefit from healthier mental and physical conditions (Bandura, 1992; Yajarse & Schung, 2002). Self-efficacy is one of the important constructs in Bandura's social-cognitive theory and refers to one's belief and confidence in his/her own ability to control thoughts, feelings, and actions as well as to function efficiently in stressful situations. Therefore, self-efficacy affects the real performance, emotions, control of influential occurrences, organization and enactment of actions needed to achieve desirable performance levels, and the degree of one's effort expenditure while doing an activity (Capra et al, 2002; Regalia & Bandura, 2002). Those with low self-efficacy feel that they are not able enough to control life happenings and in facing obstacles, they will become frustrated immediately if their first efforts do not lead to desired results (Bandura, 1992; Bisschop et al, 2004; Fritzscher & Parrish, 2005). It seems that individuals' efficient move toward their goals is the cause of positive changes in their happiness and struggling for intrinsic goals lead to happiness enhancement (Rayan & Dessey, 2000; Kesler & Sheldon, 2004).

2. Methodology

This is an analytic cross-sectional study. The population includes male and female students studying at Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University, Tehran, during the educational year 2012-2011. 326 students (male=165, female=161) were selected as the sample through random and multistep cluster sampling. Sherer et al.'s Self-Efficacy questionnaire (SGSES) was used to measure participants' self-efficacy. The questionnaire measures three components of behavior including tendency to behavior proactivity, tendency to behavior completion, and persistence in doing assignments despite failure. The original version of the questionnaire included 36 items which decreased to 17 items through factor analysis. Woodrof and Kashman (1993) confirmed the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and Asgharnejad (2006) measured the Cronbach alpha as 0.83. Using a Likert scale including five options for each item, the scores on the questionnaire range from 85 to zero. The higher score shows higher self-efficacy. Oxford Happiness questionnaire (OHS) was also used to measure participants' happiness.

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Designed by Argarial (1989), the questionnaire includes 29 items and 5 scales which are life satisfaction, positive mood, well-being, efficiency, and self-esteem. Francis et al (1998) and Alipoor and Noorbala (2008) have confirmed the reliability and validity of that. Argarial et al reported the Cronbach alpha as 0.90.

3. Results

The present study investigated the role of happiness and its subscales in predicting self-efficacy among Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University students. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, and standard error.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Standard deviation	Standard error
happiness	41.36	85	9	12.83	96%
Self-efficacy	48.65	65	21	7.76	97%

As table 1 shows mean score for happiness is 41.36 which is a normal score and this mean for male students is 42.7 and for female students is 40 and although the mean score for male students was higher than that of female students (higher happiness), the difference was not significant ($p>0.05$). In addition, the mean score for self-efficacy was 48.65 among all the participants and it is an acceptable score given the maximum score the participants could gain (87). This score for female students was 49.9 and for male students was 47.7. Although female students' self-efficacy was higher than that of male students, the difference was not significant ($p>0.05$).

Research question 1: Is there a significant relationship between self-efficacy and happiness and the subscales of happiness?

Table 2. The Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Happiness and the Subscales of Happiness

	Happiness	Life-satisfaction	Well-being	Positive mood	efficiency	Self-esteem
Self-efficacy Pearson correlation	0.540	0.362	0.506	0.462	0.684	0.635
Sig. level (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

As table 2 shows there is a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and happiness,

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r=0.540; p<.000. It means that as self-efficacy increases happiness increases, too. Self-efficacy is also positively and significantly related to the components of happiness. The correlation coefficient for the relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction is 0.362, p<.000; for the relationship between self-efficacy and well-being is 0.506, p<.000; for the relationship between self-efficacy and positive mood is 0.462, p<.000; for the relationship between self-efficacy and efficiency is 0.684, p<.000; for the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem is 0.635, p<.000. These findings show that as self-efficacy increases the components of happiness also increase. The findings of the present study are in line with previous research findings. Goleman (2001) and Mayer and Salovy showed that improvements in self-efficacy are effective in improving mental health as well as happiness. Shafiabadi et al (2010) also showed a positive and significant relationship between happiness and self-efficacy among high school students. Sarraf (2001) indicated a positive and significant correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and happiness in his research on university students.

In this regard, Harris (cited in Alipoor & Agah, 2007) believes that happiness decreases tension perception and increases the individual's abilities for activities. Feasel (1995; cited in Edington et al, 2004) assumes that self-efficacy as one's belief in his/her capability to achieve the goals can predict life satisfaction and positive emotions. According to him, feelings of self-efficacy are important to achieve pleasure, however, it should concern those areas of life which are important for the individual. Sarraf (2002) believes that human beings have two basic needs that lead to disorder and illness if not satisfied. One of them is the need to love and to be loved. The other is the need to a feeling of worth. In this regard self-efficacy could be considered as a motive according to which the people choose the right behaviors to satisfy their own needs. Men choose their expectations, demands, thoughts, beliefs, and actions in a way that would result in the best and the most pleasing state and the behavior is the result of their choice (Glasser, 2001).

Research question 2: Are happiness and the subscales of happiness significant predictors of self-efficacy?

Table 3. ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42017.661	5	8403.532	1.474E3	.000[a]
	Residual	1533.248	269	5.700		
	Total	43550.909	274			

a. Predictors: (Constant), self-esteem, life satisfaction, positive mood, well-being, efficiency

b. Dependent Variable: self-efficacy

Table 4. Regression Analysis for Predicting Self- Efficacy based on the Subscales of Happiness [a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.562	.512		1.097	.274
	Life satisfaction	1.146	.109	.160	10.518	.000
	Well-being	1.028	.091	.177	11.257	.000
	Positive mood	.805	.119	.098	6.768	.000
	Efficiency	1.421	.085	.300	16.767	.000
	Self-esteem	1.483	.066	.432	22.321	.000

a. Dependent Variable: self-efficacy

As evident in the table, all subscales of happiness are significant predictors of self-efficacy. The strongest predictor of self-efficacy is self-esteem whereas positive mood is the weakest. The results of the tables above show that by cultivating individuals' level of happiness and the subscales including life satisfaction, well- being, positive mood, efficiency, and particularly, self-esteem, it is possible to increase their self-efficacy as well.

4. Discussion

The present study investigated the role of happiness and its subscales in predicting self-efficacy among Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University students. The findings showed a positive and significant relationship between happiness and the subscales and self-efficacy. Happiness and its subscales also significantly predicted self-efficacy. Levingere and Moylan (1994) do not consider happiness as just the achievement of joy but as an effort to achieve perfection that is the actualization of one's real potential. Given the positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and happiness, it seems that the more one feels happy, the more will be his/her self-efficacy and also the higher self-efficacy would lead to higher happiness. As the happiness increases, one's self-efficacy increases and the proper conditions for development and actualization in different areas such as efficient interpersonal relationships, life satisfaction, academic and working satisfaction are provided. University students constitute a large part of the society. Occasionally severe issues and concerns of university and academic settings would influence different aspects of their life including happiness (Reynolds, 2003; Pedermin, 2002). Happiness is one of the basic and essential concepts and components of any individual's life particularly university students and many of scientific disciplines such as psychology try to develop and facilitate it. Argyle and Hills (2002) assume three components for happiness including positive emotion, life satisfaction, and lack of negative emotion such as anxiety and depression. According to

what was explored and discussed in the present study and findings from previous ones, it is of critical importance to create an academic environment in universities which is in favor of happiness and brings out positive emotions in the students. A happy climate in the university enhances students' as well as the other agents' functioning and improves the academic activities. It is an important responsibility for the managers and policy makers of higher education to plan for happy and productive settings by making proper decisions. In this regard they should benefit from experts' ideas such as psychologists and sociologists. The more universities and the students in them are happy and feel positive, the more the society will be productive and developed.

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