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An exploratory study of happiness in relation to loneliness of adolescents

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken in Bhiwani district of Haryana state. Two senior secondary schools of Bhiwani city and two senior secondary schools of village Kitlana and Chappar of Bhiwani district were selected as per demand of the study. A sample of 100 rural and 100 urban adolescents of 14-20 year age were taken, thus making a total sample of 200 adolescents. Happiness scale by Hills, P., and Argyle, M. (2002), was used to assess happiness among adolescents. Loneliness among adolescents was measured by loneliness scale developed by Rusell (1996). The findings revealed non- significant differences in happiness ($Z=0.76$), ($Z=0.96$), and loneliness level ($Z=0.98$), ($Z=0.62$) of rural /urban and girls/boys respectively.

Keywords: Happiness, relation, loneliness, adolescents

Introduction

Happiness is the degree to which people evaluate their overall quality of present life-as-a-whole positively. Happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being characterized by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contextual to intense joy. When we appraise how much we appreciate the life we live, we seem to use two sources of information: affectively, we estimate how well we feel generally and at the cognitive level we compare life as it is with perceived standards of 'how life should be'. The former, affective source of information seems to be more important than the latter cognitive one. Loneliness leads to depression and friend relationships influence loneliness more than family relationships do. In addition, the socio-economic level of the family also affects the feeling of loneliness. Teachers, administrators and parents are commonly concerned about student's self-esteem. Its significance is often exaggerated to the extent that low self- esteem is viewed as the cause of all evil and high self-esteem as the cause of all good. According to Baumeister (1998) [2], self-esteem can be defined as "the positivity of the person's evaluation of the self." Self- esteem can be an important part of happiness. Too little self- esteem can leave people feeling loneliness. It can also lead people to make bad choices, fall into destructive relationships or fail to live up to their full potential. Self -esteem is a student's overall evaluation of him or herself including feeling of general happiness and satisfaction. Therefore, keeping in view the importance of all these aspects, the present study was undertaken with the following specific objectives:

1. To assess happiness, and loneliness among adolescents.

Methodology

Present study was conducted in purposively selected Bhiwani district of Haryana state due to easy accessibility of data collection. For rural area, two villages namely Kitlana and Chappar were selected purposively as these villages were having Senior Secondary Schools for both boys and girls. To draw urban sample, two schools namely Government Girls Senior Secondary School Bhiwani and Government Boys Senior Secondary School Bhiwani were purposively selected. A list of adolescents (14-20 years) was prepared separately from each school of urban and rural area. From each area, 100 adolescents equally representing both the sexes i.e. 50 girls and 50 boys were taken randomly from the prepared list of adolescents. Hence, a total of 200 adolescents (100 rural and 100 urban) from four schools constituted the sample for the present study to assess their happiness, loneliness and self-esteem among

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adolescents. Loneliness was taken as independent variable. UCLA scale by Russell (1996) [3] was used to measured loneliness.

Results

Assessment of adolescent’s happiness

Adolescents were assessed and were distributed on different levels of happiness i.e. low, medium, and high categories. Results given in table 1 show that out of total sample 48.50 percent adolescents were in high level of happiness category

followed by 44 percent in medium level and rest 7.50 percent were having low level of happiness. Comparative distribution reflects less degree of differences between happiness level of urban and rural adolescents. However, results underscore gender difference in level of happiness, pertaining to urban and rural area as higher percentage of urban male adolescents (50.0%) were in medium level of happiness than rural male adolescents (40.0%). Further higher percent of female urban adolescents (54.0%) were having high level of happiness than rural female adolescents (44.0%).

Table 1: Distribution of adolescents as per level of happiness n=200

Area/Level of happiness	Urban			Rural			Total
	Male (n=50)	Female (n=50)	Total (n=100)	Male (n=50)	Female (n=50)	Total (n=100)	
Low (1.00-2.66)	3(6.00)	5(10.00)	8(8.00)	4(8.00)	3(6.00)	7(7.00)	15(7.50)
Medium (2.67-4.33)	25(50.00)	18(36.00)	43(43.00)	20(40.00)	25(50.00)	45(45.00)	88(44.00)
High (4.34-6.00)	22(44.00)	27(54.00)	49(49.00)	26(52.00)	22(44.00)	48(48.00)	97(48.50)

Comparison of adolescent’s happiness on the basis of area and gender

Mean scores analysis indicated that urban adolescents had comparatively more happiness (M=4.28) as compared to rural adolescents (M=4.21), the mean scores with regards to total

happiness were compared in two groups, it clearly depicts that adolescent boys were significantly lower on level of happiness (M=4.20) than adolescent girls (M=4.30). When mean scores of happiness were compared using ‘Z’ test, no significant difference were found between two groups.

Table 2: Comparison of adolescent’s happiness on the basis of area and gender, n=200

Area and gender	Happiness	‘Z’ value
Area		0.76
Rural	4.21±0.83	
Urban	4.28±0.52	0.96
Gender		
Boys	4.20±0.75	
Girls	4.30±0.62	

Assessment of adolescent’s loneliness

Table 3 represents the results related to loneliness of adolescents as per their area of residence. Results depict that 44 percent respondents of urban area had medium level of loneliness against 59 percent rural adolescents, whereas examination of the data for overall rural sample for loneliness

was 51.5 percent. Further, 49 percent urban and 34 percent rural respondents were having low level of loneliness, whereas, in total sample 41.50 percent respondents had low level of loneliness. The high level of loneliness was reported by equal percent (7%) respondents in both rural and urban area.

Table 3: Distribution of adolescents as per level of loneliness, n=200

Area/Level of loneliness	Urban			Rural			Total
	Male (n=50)	Female (n=50)	Total (n=100)	Male (n=50)	Female (n=50)	Total (n=100)	
Low (20-40)	23(46.00)	26(52.00)	49(49.00)	17(34.00)	17(34.00)	34(34.00)	83(41.50)
Medium (41-60)	24(48.00)	20(40.00)	44(44.00)	30(60.00)	29(58.00)	59(59.00)	103(51.50)
High (61.80)	3(6.00)	4(8.00)	7(7.00)	3(6.00)	4(8.00)	7(7.00)	14(7.00)

Comparison of adolescent’s loneliness on the basis of area and gender

Results indicate no significant differences in level of loneliness (Z=1.26) at 0.05 % level of significance. With regards to area and gender mean scores result indicated that adolescents of rural area (M=41.18) had comparatively high level of loneliness than urban area (M= 39.26). Mean scores disclosed that boys (M=40.38) had more loneliness than girls (M=40.06). Concluding the results it can be interpreted that boys had high level of loneliness than girls and rural adolescents were having high level of loneliness than urban adolescents.

The same distributions were found in urban and rural Area. Comparative analysis of happiness as per gender and area revealed no significant differences in happiness of Rural/ Urban respondents and boys/ girls. Results of adolescents’ distribution as per level of loneliness found more percentage of adolescents in medium level of loneliness followed by low and high level of loneliness. Results further depict that more percentage of rural male and female adolescents had medium level of loneliness than urban adolescents. The percentage of adolescents having low level of loneliness was more in urban area as compared to rural area. Comparison of adolescent’s loneliness on the basis of area and gender resulted no significant differences for rural/ urban and boys/girls.

Conclusion

The present study has come out with the assessment of adolescent’s happiness and loneliness. Out of total sample, nearly fifty percent of the respondents were having high level of happiness followed by medium and low level of Happiness.

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