Happiness, Perfectionism, and Life Satisfaction among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The present study scrutinizes happiness, perfectionism, and life satisfaction among adolescents. The sample consists of 100 students (boys =50, girls =50), who were randomly selected from Senior Secondary Schools, AMU, Aligarh.Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS; Lyubomirsky et al. 1999), Almost Perfect Scale –Revised (APS-R; Slaney et al. 2001),and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al. 1985) were used. The results of the t-test showedthe significant difference between boys and girls on life satisfaction and happiness i.e. girls scored more on life satisfaction and happiness as compare to boys. Correlational analysis showed that there were significant positive correlation of life satisfaction with happiness and adaptive perfectionism. Further, results of stepwise multiple regression analysis showed that happiness and the standard (dimension of perfectionism), gender, and order (dimension of perfectionism)were significant predictors of life satisfaction. This study will be better implications for parents, counsellors, psychologists, and further researchers to know the role of happiness and perfectionism in life satisfaction of adolescents.

Keywords: *Happiness, perfectionism, life satisfaction, adolescents*

INTRODUCTION

Previous study showed that many psychologists found happiness and perfectionism is an important aspect of life satisfaction among adolescents in positive psychology. There are many factors such as personality type, temperament, attributional style, family, friends, and teacher's relationship, and variety of contextual factors have been shown to relate to adolescent life satisfaction. Researches (Antaramian, Huebner, & Valois, 2008; Dew& Huebner, 1994) show that family relationships have been greater significance impact than peer, school, or other community of adolescence life satisfaction.

Shin and Johnson (1978) defined life satisfaction "as a global assessment of person's quality of life according to his chosen criteria". Similarly, Veenhoven (1991) defined life satisfaction as "the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life-as-a-whole favourably." Sometimes, life satisfaction, happiness, and wellbeing used synonym because these are capable to measure the same by self-assessment, as the higher score on an instrument measuring life satisfaction similarly suggests a higher level of happiness or wellbeing. Life satisfaction is defined as a cognitive evaluation of one's life as whole and/or of specific life domains (Huebner et al., 2005; Myers & Diener, 1995).

Happiness

Various research groups, including positive psychology, interested on happiness, according to Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005) happy persons, for example, are successful across multiple life domains, including marriage, friendship, income, academic and job performance, and health ''not only because success makes people happy, but also because positive affect engenders success''. After a meta-analysis of 245 studies in 32 countries, Veenhoven (1991) identifies the following factors as ones associated with happiness rather than unhappiness –living in an economically prosperous country where freedom and democracy are respected; political stability; being a part of a majority rather than a minority; being toward the top of the social ladder; being married and having good relationships with family and friends; being mentally and physically healthy; being active and open minded; feeling in control of one's life; having aspirations in social and moral matters rather than money-making and being politically conservative. Psychologist Martin Seligman (2004) asserts that happiness is not solely derived from external, momentary pleasures, and provides the acronym PERMA to summarize Positive Psychology's correlational findings: humans seem happiest when they have -*Pleasure* (tasty food, warm baths, etc.), *Engagement* (or flow, the absorption of an enjoyed yet challenging activity), *Relationships* (social ties have turned out to be extremely reliable indicator of happiness), *Meaning* (a perceived quest or belonging to something bigger), and *Accomplishments* (having realized tangible goals).

Studies show that happiness is positively correlated with life satisfaction in adolescents (Gamble & Garling, 2012; Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Huebner, 1997). In a study on the momentary happiness and the role of psychological need satisfaction R.T. Howell, Chenot, Hill, and C. J. Howell (2011) found that hour-by-hour ratings of psychological need satisfaction were correlated with momentary happiness, with individual differences in life satisfaction moderating this relationship. Ratings of autonomy and relatedness correlated positively with momentary happiness, while competence was negatively correlated with momentary happiness. Further, when autonomy and relatedness needs were met, individuals with high levels of life satisfaction experienced greater increases in happiness than individuals with low levels of life satisfaction. Their finding supports a sensitization model of well-being.

Schütz et al. (2013) studied on the affective profiles in the USA: happiness, depression, life satisfaction, and happiness increasing strategies. Their results showed that, compared to the other profiles, self-fulfilling individuals were less depressed, happier, and more satisfied with their lives. Nevertheless, self-destructive individuals were more depressed, unhappier, and less satisfied than all other profiles. The self-fulfilling individuals tended to use strategies related to agentic (e.g., instrumental goal-pursuit), communal (e.g., social affiliation), and spiritual (e.g., religion) values when pursuing happiness.

Ismail, Hafezi, MohdNorand Baghini (2014) studied on happiness rate and life satisfaction among Malaysian household, their results showed that in terms of happy rate, most aspects contribute to the human happiness such as life good health or happy family is good health.

Perfectionism

Perfectionism is define as striving for flawlessness and setting of excessively high standards for performance, accompanied by tendencies toward overly critical evaluations of one's behavior (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). Perfectionism conceptualized as multidimensional (Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991a). Frost et al. (1990) described the five dimensions of perfectionism, i.e. concern over mistakes, this reflects a tendency to interpret mistakes as equivalent to failure; personal standards is setting excessively high which often cannot be met satisfactory; parental expectations, it involves the extent to which the parents setting high expectations; parental criticism, which involves the extent to which parents are perceived as being overly critical; and doubts about actions, which is the tendency to doubt the quality of one's performance. Among these five dimensions two are interpersonal (i.e. parental expectations and parental criticism) and three are intrapersonal (i.e. personal standards, concern over mistakes, and doubts about actions). Hewitt and Flett (1991b) identified three dimensions of perfectionism- self-oriented perfectionism, other-oriented perfectionism and socially-prescribed perfectionism. Similarly, Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, and Ashby (2001) also identified three dimensions of perfectionism as standards, discrepancy, and order.

Perfectionism has been differentiated of adaptive and maladaptive as Hamacheck (1978) distinguished between "normal" and "neurotic" perfectionism. Slaney et al (2001) developed the almost perfect scale-revised (APS-R) to identify perfectionists (adaptive or maladaptive) and non-perfectionists, in this measure people are classified based on their scores on standards, order, and discrepancy. Adaptive perfectionism rated high on standards and order, and maladaptive perfectionism rated high on discrepancy. Discrepancy refers to the belief that personal high standards are not being met, which is the defining negative aspect of perfectionism.

Maladaptive perfectionism have been consistently linked with psychological distress (Aldea & Rice, 2006; Flett & Hewitt, 2012; Flett et al., 2012; Rice, Leever, Christopher, & Porter, 2006, Shaheen & Zilli, 2013), depression, anxiety, hopelessness, and neuroticism (Ashby, Noble, &Gnilka, 2012; Gnilka, Ashby, & Noble, 2012; Gnilka, Ashby, & Noble, 2013), lower levels of academic adjustment (Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000; Rice et al., 2006) etc.

Various previous research revealed that significant positive relationship between adaptive perfectionism and a variety of positive outcome variables, such as life satisfaction (Boldaji & Nikbakhsh, 2014; Chang, Watkins, & Banks, 2004;Gilman & Ashby, 2003; Gilman, Ashby, Sverko, Florell, & Varjas, 2005; Rice & Ashby, 2007), conscientiousness (Cox, Enns, & Clara, 2002; Enns, Cox, Sareen, & Freeman, 2001; Parker & Stumpf, 1995), active coping (Dunkley, Blankstein, Halsall, Williams, & Winkworth, 2000), and higher academic achievement (Bieling, Israeli, Smith, & Antony, 2003; Enns et al., 2001). A recent study, Park and Jeong (2015) found adaptive perfectionists reported higher levels of environmental mastery and purpose in life of psychological well-being than non perfectionists and maladaptive perfectionists. Adaptive perfectionists and non perfectionists showed higher life satisfaction and self-esteem than maladaptive perfectionists. The present study was conducted to examine the role of happiness and perfectionism in life satisfaction among adolescents.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypothesis were formulated for the present study:

1. There will be significant difference between male and female adolescents on happiness, perfectionism, and life satisfaction.
2. There will be correlation between three variable i. e. happiness, perfectionism, and life satisfaction(i.e., 2.1 &2.2):
    2.1. Happiness and adaptive perfectionism will be positive relationship with life satisfaction.
    2.2. Maladaptive perfectionism will be negative relationship with happiness and life satisfaction.
3. Happiness and perfectionism will be emerge important predictors of life satisfaction(i.e., 3.1 & 3.2):
    3.1. Happiness and adaptive perfectionism will emerge as a positive predictor of life satisfaction.
    3.2. Maladaptive perfectionism will emerge as a negative predictor of life satisfaction.

METHODS

Participants

For present study, a sample of 100 adolescents (boys =50,girls =50) were randomly assigned from Senior Secondary Schools of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh, India. The age of the participants was ranged between 16 to 19 years, and the average age was 16.8 years. All the participants came from middle socio-economic background.

Instrument

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS): The SWLS is a global cognitive assessment of life satisfaction which was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985).The SWLS consists of five items (e.g., ''The conditions of my life are excellent.''). Each item is responded to by using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7(strongly agree). This scale has been shown to have excellent psychometric properties (Diener et al., 1985).

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS): The SHS was developed by Lyubomirsky, Sonja, Lepper, and Heidi (1999) showed that this scale contains 4 items, one items asking respondents about their general level of happiness (e.g., "In general, I consider myself"), another items asking respondents to characterize themselves by comparing with their peers (e.g., "Compare to my peer, I consider myself"), while another two items briefly describe what constitute a happy and unhappy individual and respondents need to responds by choosing the extent to which the description characterize them (e.g., "Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?"). The scale of measurement for this questionnaire is interval scale. Items were rated on 7-point Likert scale range from never (1) to always (7). The SHS scores are obtained by reversing the scores on question 4 and then summing up the score for all items, and finally averaging the total score. Higher score indicated higher level of happiness. Lyubomirsky et al.(1999) shows that the internal consistency of this questionnaire ranged from

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0.79 to 0.94while test-retest reliability ranged from 0.55 to 0.90. Convergent validity ranged from0.52 to 0.72.

Almost Perfect Scale-Revised(APS-R): The APS-R was used to assess levels and adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of perfectionism which was originally developed by Johnson and Slaney (1996) further it was revised by Slaney et al. (2001). The APS-R consists of 23items with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to7 (*strongly agree*). The APS-R contains three subscales i.e., standards (7 items measuring personal standards for performance), order (4 items measuring desire for organization and need for orderliness), and discrepancy (12 items measuring distress caused by the perceived discrepancy between performance and personal standards).Total scores for the entire instrument range from 23 to 161, and for the subscales range from 7 to 49 for standards, 4 to 28 for order, and 12 to 84 for discrepancy. Coefficient alphas were reported for standards .85, order, .86 and discrepancy.92 (Slaney, et al., 2001).Ashby and Rice (2002) reported similar reliability coefficients for standards, .84, for order, .85 and for discrepancy .93.

Procedure

For collecting data the sample was randomly selected students of Senior Secondary Schools of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India. Administration was done in the classroom situation, the investigator first established a rapport with subject and getting their consent after then they were given a set of questionnaires, such as demographic sheet, SHS, APS-R, and SLS in a booklet form. Researcher collects the questionnaires after completion, and thanked them for their cooperation. For computing data SPSS-16 version was used.

RESULT

The data were analysed by Mean, SD and t-test to find out significance difference between male and female. Pearson Product Moment of Correlation Coefficient was used to see the relationship between psychological variables (i.e. happiness, perfectionism, and life satisfaction).Lastly, multiple regression analysis was used to know the predictor variables of the criterion variable (i.e. life satisfaction). Results are presented in the following tables:

Table 1 Comparison of Girls and Boys on Happiness, Perfectionism ,and Life Satisfaction

Variables	Boys(N=50)		Girls (N=50)		t-value (df=98)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Life Satisfaction	20.340	6.249	24.220	4.979	3.434**
Happiness	18.100	4.837	20.160	4.727	2.154*
Perfectionism					
Standard	39.240	4.935	38.060	4.631	1.233
Order	21.400	3.964	20.160	3.407	1.677
Discrepancy	52.680	9.488	49.220	10.880	1.695

**p< .01; *p< .05

The results shown in Table 1 indicated that the mean score of life satisfaction for girls (Mean =24.22) was significantly higher as compared to boys (Mean = 20.34, t-value = 3.434, $p < .01$). Similarly, the mean score of happiness for girls (Mean =20.16) was significantly higher as compared to boys (Mean = 18.100, t-value = 2.154, $p < .05$).

Table 2
Inter-correlations between Happiness, Dimensions of Perfectionism, and Life Satisfaction among Students (N=100).

Variables	Life Satisfaction	Happiness	Standard	Order	Discrepancy
Life Satisfaction	1				
Happiness	.407**	1			
Standard	.340**	.096	1		
Order	.281**	.000	.340**	1	
Discrepancy	-.116	-.222*	.189	.093	1
Mean	22.280	19.130	38.650	20.780	50.950
SD	5.949	4.869	4.797	3.729	10.303

**p< .01; *p< .05

Table 2 showed the significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and happiness (r=.407, p< .01), and between life satisfaction with standard (r=.340, p< .01), and order (r=.281, p< .01) dimensions of perfectionism. It was also found that happiness was significantly negatively correlated with discrepancy dimension of perfectionism (r=-.222, p< .05).

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to find out the significant predictors of life satisfaction among adolescents. The analysis was done for the total sample i.e. two gender groups (girls and boys). Results of these analyses are presented in Table 3:

Table 3 *Results of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for Prediction of Life Satisfaction*

Step No.	Predictor Variables	R	R^2	F	ΔR^2	F change	β	t	Constant
1	Happiness	.407	.166	19.460***	.166	19.460***	.379	3.769***	-11.955
2	Standard	.507	.257	16.806***	.092	11.973***	.333	3.139**	
3	Gender	.587	.344	16.803***	.087	12.732***	3.979	4.042***	
4	Order	.630	.397	15.621***	.052	8.262**	.392	2.874**	

***p < .001, **p < .01.

Tables 3showed that four independent variables that is happiness, standard, gender, and order have entered in the regression model in a hierarchical manner. All of these variables collectively account for approximately 39.7% of the total variance in life satisfaction(R^2 =.397, F = 15.621, $p < .001$).

Table3showed that the first independent variable i.e. happiness is the most significant predictor of life satisfaction which accounts for 16.6% of the total variance in life satisfaction. Beta value for

this variable showed a significant positive predictive relationship between life satisfaction and happiness (β = .379, t- value =3.769, $p < .001$).

The second important predictor is standard dimension of perfectionism. It along with happiness accounts for 25.7% of the total variance in life satisfaction. However, its individual contribution is 9.2% (ΔR^2=.092, F-change = 11.973, $p < .001$). The beta value for this variable indicated a significant positive predictive relationship between life satisfaction and standard dimension of perfectionism (β = .333, t-value = 3.139, $p < .01$).

The third predictor is gender (girls vs. boys). It, along with happiness and standard, accounts for 34.4% of the total variance in life satisfaction. However, its individual contribution is 8.7% (ΔR^2=.087, F-change = 12.732, $p < .001$). The beta value for this variable showed that a significant positive predictive relationship between life satisfaction and gender (indicated that girls have more life satisfaction; β =3.979, t- value =4.042, $p < .001$).

The fourth and last predictor is order dimension of perfectionism. It along with happiness, standard and gender accounts for 39.7% of the total variance in life satisfaction. However, its individual contribution is 5.2% (ΔR^2=.052, F-change = 8.262, $p < .01$). The beta value for this variable showed a positive predictive relationship between life satisfaction and order dimension of perfectionism (β = .392, t-value = 2.874, $p < .01$).

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to examine happiness, perfectionism, and life satisfaction among adolescents. The result of the present study showed that the first hypothesis that there will be significant difference between male and female adolescents on happiness, perfectionism and life satisfaction was partially confirmed as happiness and life satisfaction was significantly differed between boys and girls except perfectionism. This was consistent of previous findings by Vaidya (2014) who conducted a study among college students and found significant gender differences on happiness. Girls were found to be more happier than boys; as boys have more stress due to more pressure of getting good marks and also of securing job. In contrast, as compared to boys, girls receive more social support from friends, family, and teachers than boys thereby, more happiness on the part of girls. Moreover, the result of the present study showed the gender differences on life satisfaction, which was also consistent and supported by previous studies (Dorahy, Schumaker, Simpson, & Deshpande, 1996; Khan, Shirazi, & Ahmed, 2011) who in their study found that female reported higher life satisfaction than male students.

Further the result of correlational analysis showed that the first part (2.1) of second hypothesis that happiness and adaptive perfectionism will be positive relationship with life satisfaction was confirmed as happiness and adaptive perfectionism i.e. standard and order scores was significantly positive correlated with life satisfaction, while second part (2.2) of second hypothesis that maladaptive perfectionism will be negative relationship with happiness and life satisfaction was partially confirmed as the only happiness scores was significantly negative correlated to maladaptive perfectionism i.e. discrepancy scores. This result of the present study was supported by Bourne, Chloe, and Eldemire-Shearer (2010), who also found in their study that happiness was positively related to life satisfaction.

Moreover, the present finding that positive relationship between life satisfaction and adaptive perfectionism was also supported by Gilman, et al, (2005). They found among Croatian and American youth, that differential predictive values of personal standards and discrepancy across satisfaction domains for both groups. Further, adaptive perfectionists reported significantly higher satisfaction across many life domains for both groups than maladaptive perfectionists and non-perfectionists. Similarly, Chan (2012) also found that healthy perfectionists were to be the happiest and the most satisfied with life, and unhealthy perfectionists to be the least happy and the least satisfied with life, with non-perfectionists lying in between the two groups.

The results of the regression analysis revealed that the third hypothesis was partially approved as its first part (3.1) that, happiness and adaptive perfectionism will emerge as a positive predictor of life satisfaction, was confirmed. It was supported by previous findings that adaptive perfectionism was significant positive predictor of life satisfaction (Boldaji & Nikbakhsh, 2014**;**Ongen, 2009). Pandey, and Singh (2009) found in their study discrepancies between self-set goal and parent-set goals were leads low well-being and satisfaction among young adults. Further, the result that happiness as a positive predictor of life satisfaction was supported by Ismail, et al, (2014) who studied on happiness rate and life satisfaction and found happiness contributed to the most aspects of human satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

From the result and discussion of the present study it is concluded that happiness and adaptive perfectionism contribute positive impact of adolescent's daily life and low magnitude of happiness and maladaptive perfectionism leads negative impact of life satisfaction. Therefore, happiness and adaptive perfectionism contribute reducing certain risk factors such as anxiety, depression or other form of mental health problems among adolescent. The implication of this study will benefits in family especially parents, schoolteachers, and social workers as how expectations of high standard from their student or children beyond their ability which lead maladaptive perfectionism, and unhappiness, and low life satisfaction among adolescents. Thus, this study is useful to enhance life satisfaction of students by developing adaptive perfectionism and certain positive personality trait which increase happiness.

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