

The Relationship between Students' Mental Health and Happiness

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ABSTRACT: The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between students' mental health and happiness. It was a descriptive study following a correlational approach with a statistical population of all educational sciences students (bachelors and masters) in the University of Sistan and Baluchestan which included 400 subjects. The sampling was done in a simple random method and a number of 196 subjects were studied as samples based on Morgan's table. Research tools included Goldberg's questionnaire (1979) including 28 questions on General Health Questions (GHQ) and Argyle and Crossland's happiness questionnaire (1989) including 29 questions. The content validity of the questionnaires was confirmed and their reliability was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha. Descriptive and inferential analyses including Pearson's correlation coefficient and independent t-test were used for data analysis. Results of Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that there is a positive significant relationship between mental health and happiness of students. Results of the independent t-test showed that there is no significant difference between mental health and happiness of the students in terms of their marital status.

Keywords: Mental Health, Happiness, Education.

INTRODUCTION

Issues such as mental health and happiness play a crucial role in providing opportunities for individual and social improvement (Mihaly & Hunter, 2003; Asgari et al., 2008). Consequently, they can prepare grounds for national improvement and blooming of communities, including the scientific and academic communities, especially the students and ensure their dynamism and efficiency. Obviously, mental health and happiness which are necessary components of student life have direct effects in these selected strata's learning and increase their scientific awareness (Pickers et al., 2011; Namdar Areshtanab et al., 2013). Accordingly, the World Health Organization has defined mental health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Kalpesh et al., 2014). Mental health is the ability to communicate harmoniously, change and modify the personal and social environment and to solve personal desires and controversies in a logical, fair and suitable way (Kinz, 2007; quoted by Heydari Pour et al., 2013; Milanifar, 2003). Mental health provides the person with the ability to disclose their thoughts and have a healthy interaction with the environment (Rezapour, 2011). As it can be inferred from this definition, mental health can be considered the ability to avoid anxiety and disability symptoms, constructive communication with others and the ability to confront the pressures in life. Happiness is

also considered an important part of living quality (Nawijn & Veenhoven, 2013). Happiness is a combination of the presence of positive emotions and lack of negative emotions and satisfaction with one's life (Argyle, 2001; Argyle & Martin Lu, 1995). The person with higher levels of happiness, feels more relaxed and secured, makes decisions easier, works more efficiently and cooperates more, lives a healthy and more energetic life and finally has a more satisfactory life (Pressman & Cohen, 2005). Schwartz and Stark (1991) believe that happy people are the ones with an optimistic and happy orientation; that is, they process and interpret information in such a way to lead to their happiness (Alipour et al., 2001). A review of the literature on mental health and happiness indicates how important this issue is. Therefore, significant positive relationships have been reported between mental health and spiritual intelligence (Goodarzi et al., 2010), mental health and emotional intelligence components (Salarifar et al., 2008), mental health and effectiveness of educational activities (Mehdinezhad, 2012) and mental health and job satisfaction (Rezapour, 2011). In addition, a significant positive relationship is also observed between happiness and spiritual health (Yaghoobi, 2010; Bagheri et al., 2010), happiness and organizational atmosphere (Vaziri & Shirzadi Esfahani, 2010), happiness and job satisfaction (Alipour & Arab Sheibani, 2011) and happiness and educational background and gender (Chen et al., 2013).

According to the aforementioned points and the significance of this subject, this study attempts to investigate the relationship between mental health and happiness in students and aims at answering the question whether mental health is significantly related to happiness in students. Obviously, an investigation of this subject in a specialized form and a focus on the relationship between mental health and happiness will be a special study of significance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Considering the nature of the current study, that is, the investigation of the relationship between mental health and happiness in students, this is a descriptive study following a correlational approach. The statistical population included all the students of educational sciences (bachelors and masters) in the University of Sistan and Baluchestan, which was a total number of 400 students. A total number of 196 subjects were selected by simple random sampling and based on Morgan's table. Having collected the data, the incomplete questionnaires (15 copies) were excluded and the analysis was done using the remaining 181 questionnaires.

Research Instruments

Two questionnaires were used in this study for data collection. The first was the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) that includes 28 questions and was introduced by Goldberg (1979) with a scale of 0-3. The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study was calculated to be 0.77. The second one was the happiness questionnaire proposed by Argyle and Crossland (1989). Each article of this scale is assigned four options (phrases) in the scale of 0-3 which indicates the degree of happiness. The subjects should select one of the options as the answer. The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study was 0.94. It is noteworthy that SPSS version 19 was used for data analysis.

Research Hypotheses

- There is a significant relationship between mental health and happiness of students.
- There is a significant difference in mental health of students in terms of their marital status.
- There is a significant difference in happiness of students in terms of their marital status.

RESULTS

Table 1. Results of Pearson's correlation test between students' mental health and happiness.

Variables	Number	r	Sig.
Mental Health	181	0.47	0.00
Happiness	181		

Table 1 also shows that the correlation coefficient between mental health and happiness is $r=0.47$ which is calculated at the confidence level of 99 percent ($P<0.01$). That is, there is a significant positive relationship between mental health and happiness of the students.

Table 2. Results of the independent t-test regarding mental health in terms of the students' marital status.

Variables	Gender	Number	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Mental health	Single	170	41.91	30.26	0.01	179	0.99
	Married	11	41.81	33.62			

Findings of table 2 regarding mental health in terms of the students' marital status indicate that the mean and standard deviation of single students are 41.91 and 30.26, respectively. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of married students are 41.81 and 33.62, respectively. This difference is not significant ($P>0.05$) at $t=0.010$ with a degree of freedom of 179 at confidence level of 95 percent. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in mental health of students in terms of their marital status.

Table 3. Results of the independent t-test regarding happiness in terms of students' marital status.

Variables	Gender	Number	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Happiness	Single	170	71.70	17.36	0.80	179	0.42
	Married	11	67.27	21.82			

Findings of table 2 regarding happiness in terms of the students' marital status indicate that the mean and standard deviation of single students are 71.70 and 17.36, respectively. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of married students are 67.27 and 21.82, respectively. This difference is not significant ($P>0.05$) at $t=0.080$ with a degree of freedom of 179 at confidence level of 95 percent. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in happiness of students in terms of their marital status.

CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between mental health and happiness of students of educational sciences in the University of Sistan and Baluchestan. Accordingly, results of Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that there is a significant positive relationship between mental health and happiness of the students. This was consistent with findings of the study conducted by Mehdinezhad (2012), Rezapour (2011) and Salarifar et al (2008). Furthermore, results of the independent t-test showed that there is no significant difference between mental health and happiness of students in terms of their marital status. This was consistent with findings of Yaghoobi (2010) and Chen et al (2013). However, findings of this study were not consistent with results of Alipour and Aarab Sheibani (2011).

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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