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The Relationship Between Happiness and Depression Among Senior High School Students Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ritz Padilla*, Kristina Tolosa, Patricia Placiente, Krystle Marie Compuesto, Jhoselle Tus

[For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.](#)

Abstract

The current situation amidst the pandemic has caused such negativities to people, especially among students. It has affected the well-being and happiness that everyone experiences. In, on the other hand, students who were enrolled amidst the pandemic were more likely to experience mental exhaustion such as anxiety and depression, as this current situation limits and affect their academic performances and the level of happiness they feel. This study investigates the relationship between happiness and depression among senior high school students here in the Philippines. The findings revealed a significant correlation between happiness and depression ($r=0.041$).

Keywords: Happiness, Depression, Online Learning, COVID-19 Pandemic, Senior High School Students

Introduction

Some people tend to wonder about the true definition of happiness; happiness that comes from their favorite music, food, places, habits, people, and happiness that makes their life contented. Happiness is also defined as an emotional state described by feelings of fulfillment, joy, and satisfaction. Though it has different definitions, some studies mostly describe this as an evolving positive emotion and life satisfaction. While some prefer this to as a more general sense of how they feel about life overall. Social scientists and psychologists typically use the term subjective well-being in referring to the emotional state.

According to Cherry (2022), subjective well-being tends to focus on an individual's overall personal feelings about their current life. The findings of her study also show that in the absence of happiness, depression arises which affects several people, mostly those who are lack of social support and comfort. A study from American Psychiatric Association (2022) defines depression as a common and serious mental illness that affects an individual's physiologically and psychologically negatively. Depression causes extreme sadness and loneliness, and a loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical issues and can decrease one's ability to perform well.

With Fritz (1984), happiness is one of the factors that influence the students' academic achievement. According to research, people who have a high level of happiness are more active in their academe and thus,

involve progress in higher education. Which states that there is a significant correlation between happiness and students, as it helps the students to gain will in improving and continuing their schooling, and are more likely to experience depression. On the other hand, those who are diagnosed with depression were related with lower grades, thus, affecting their state of happiness (Hysenbegasi et al., 2005), which, among undergraduates of 21.6% reported that depression has negatively affected their academic performances (American College Health Association, 2019). Where areas, it states that there is a significant relationship between depression and students, where it also concludes that depression has a negative impact on students. The study reported that lower marks in exams and lower averages in courses were all factors of decrease in happiness and thus, leading to depression.

Meanwhile, Pompili et al. (2015) found out that the subjective happiness and risks of suicides conclude a significant relationship. Based on the findings, physicians should address both risk and protective variables so as to avoid suicide behavior among students, particularly those that lacks self-esteem and efficiency. However, in the study of Bahrami et al., (2011), it was found that there was no significant relationship between happiness and studying, yet, there was a significant and negative correlation between happiness and depression. The result showed that depression had inverse relationship with happiness. According to Moeini et al. (2018), the decrease in happiness will lead to the increase of depression a student could experience. Meanwhile, the study

showed that there was a negative relationship in depression with happiness.

Moreover, this study investigates the relationship of happiness and depression among senior high school students. This study will give benefits to students who were currently experiencing depression as it will present possible factors affecting their state and happiness that results in unwanted anxieties and depression.

Research Question

This study investigates the relationship between happiness and depression among senior high school students. Specifically, this sought to answer the following question:

1. Is there a significant relationship between happiness and depression among senior high school students?

Literature Review

Happiness

Happiness is a relevant talk and yet less-explored topic in higher education. According to Kuo et al. (2021), the study shows that research regarding happiness is needed to examine the course in high education and its influence to students through experimental learning activities. The purpose of their study was to analyze the development of a happiness course in higher education and understand students' perspectives toward their experiential learning activities.

With the study of SalehSedghpour et al., (2020), they stated that happiness is the greatest level of positive emotion. Eliminating possible worries, physical pain, solving tough problems, and winning an anxiety matters are examples of a pattern on reduced of happiness arousal neurologically. In some instances, people could prepare themselves on dealing effectively with stressful life situations that have already provided the possibility of mental and physical health, and well-being. Therefore, determining the factors that lead to the well-being and mental health of individuals is a relevant matter. Happiness plays a vital role and gives off influential variables in human life. The satisfaction in the effect of happiness on life is relevant.

Happiness also gives a big impact on the students' productivity, will, determination, and motivation in doing a task in school. According to the study of Abdollahi et al., (2019), happiness plays an important

role in influencing adolescents' performance in a different context. Which means, happiness contributes such factor in the performance of an adolescents, for instance as they feel happy, they have a greater probability of performing with their best. Based on the findings of Durón-Ramos et al. (2018), their study revealed a vivid and significant association between happiness orientation and student involvement. This emphasizes the need of encouragement for students, as to acquire good attitude and traits in boosting their confidence in academics and growth as an individual.

Further, according to the study of Flynn and MacLeod (2015), academic success, self-esteem, and financial security, respectively, accounted for the students' satisfaction as shown in the majority of the students. Where areas, self-esteem contributes a marked effect on their academic performance. Students with higher grades and who are financially stable are considered in the higher state of happiness.

Depression

Depression is a widespread and a relevant medical condition that has a negative impact on the physical and psychological state of an individual. It produces unhappiness or a loss of enthusiasm and motivations in a valued activity beforehand (Torres et al., 2020). According to the study of Bibring (2021), depression is a manifestation of emotional sense of ego-powerlessness and ego-helplessness of a narcissistic desires. Depression was resulted by a student's relation on the sense of powerlessness. Notions that were accepted on the involvement of violence and orality in depression were validated by the fact that depression is mainly an ego reaction in a narcissistic dissatisfaction.

In the current state of our world amidst pandemic, depression is the most common issue that people are enduring due to the wariness, anxiety, stress, and pressure they are experiencing with the pandemic. According to the study of Zvolensky et al., (2021), worrying was related to higher levels of apprehensive arousal, overall melancholy, social anxiety and insomnia. These results were obviously considered regardless of the overall standing of people. Based on the study of House et al., (2018), it shows that the overall depression levels were significantly improved, as with sleeping habits and in somatic pain and aches reductions, eating issues, and burdens in attention.

In the study of Cahuas et al. (2020), regular physical exercise with enough sleep is effective in reducing and monitoring depression symptoms among college student. Where areas, students should have enough and

balanced sleep for them to decrease and control the possible symptoms of depression.

According to the findings of Townsend et al., (2017), students with more optimist school climate were more likely to be aware of depression. This study highlights the elements of the school environment that may help or hinder students' awareness regarding depression and seeking possible treatment.

Happiness and Depression

Happiness and depression are a state of emotions that people commonly experience. It is also an experience of well-being and psychological health that has existing influence of the community that predicts understanding and value. It connects the happiness and depression by analyzing and evaluating the hypothesis and valuing the samples in a comparable way. In the study of Ford et al., (2014) the study illustrated that, their direct emotions towards a goal through their actions, were influenced by their life circumstances and issues. Based on the study of Muñoz-Velázquez et al., (2017), their findings describe the things or experiences that are related to psychological well-being than material goods. It is associated with happiness and depression with the reports of assessing the aims to be reliable and contains great test for the development of well-being. This study concludes that students should materialize their behavior as to assess their feelings or emotions.

The expression of happiness and depression are mostly dependent on the situation we are at the moment. Some previous studies have concluded that it has an impact on minds of human and well-being as how people could express themselves in order to cope up and overcome the challenges of life. According to the study of Park (2014), the results indicate the state of level of happiness and depression among students. Where areas, the different emotional self-disclosure of experience in different settings, such as in society or in interactions with others, were factually evaluated, in which happiness and depression among students are in a significant correlation. Their study also assesses the different emotional levels of both male and female, as well as the implications of their emotions on their well-being and its impact to the students' academic performances.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed descriptive-correlational design to evaluate the existing relationship between happiness and depression among senior high school students.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were 193 senior high school students, who were enrolled to private schools during school year 2021-2022. As a result, this study used a convenience sampling strategy, due to the pandemic.

Instruments

The researchers utilized two instruments to measure the happiness and depression among students. The Oxford Happiness Inventory that was developed by Oxford University Press (OHI) was utilized in this study. OHI includes 29 items, in which each requires the selection of one of three options. This scale aim to measure the level of happiness that the respondents feel in their current situation. To exquisitely determine and measure the happiness of the respondents, the study also used the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) that was primarily based on the Oxford Happiness Scale (OHS). OHQ also contains items that are comparable to those in the OHI, but each was given a single statement that could be supported on a six-point Likert scale.

Meanwhile, to measure and assess the depression, anxiety, and stress level of the respondents, the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS) was used. This was developed by Loviband (1995), which contains 21 Items and a collection of three self-report scales for the mentioned target variables.

Procedure

Before proceeding in answering the questionnaire, the researchers asked the respondents for consent respectively. Their participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Their responses will also be kept strictly confidential and will be secured by the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173). Following the completion of the questionnaires by the students, the data was organized in accordance to factual references. The collected data will be served as a reference to develop an existing interpretation and analysis of findings in this study.

Ethical Considerations

With the researcher's situation during COVID-19 pandemic, the ethical standards were exceptionally and strictly enforced in various online platforms as to

avoid any violations regarding the pandemic. Where, the survey questionnaire was done via Google form. The consent was included in the first section of the survey form to ensure that the researchers have the respondents' full permission before proceeding with both the questionnaires and the application of ethical considerations. The research professor also approved of their methods and instruments used in gathering the data. Moreover, the confidentiality of the participants' data input was assuredly secured and protected by the researchers and this study. With the factors in mind, the language utilized in the questionnaire was considered for both Filipino and English speakers.

Result

This part contains the statistical findings gathered as well as the relationships of the variables. Using the SPSS results, the amount that was calculated to analyze the variables between them was assessed. It is confirmed by the computation that was present in the following table.

The Relationship between Happiness and Depression

This study demonstrates the findings on the relationship between happiness and depression. It analyses the statistical result of $r=0.041$ that concludes a significant relationship that was based on table 1. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1

Relationship between Happiness and Depression

CORRELATION		
	<i>Happiness</i>	<i>Depression</i>
<i>Happiness</i>	-	.041*
<i>Depression</i>	.041*	-

In the study of Ford et al. (2014), their findings demonstrate that people's feelings of happiness, despair, and experiences influence their daily lives, as well as students' way of coping in various instances. These factors also affect their physical and mental condition, thus, more likely to result from anxieties and depression. Where areas, the study stated that happiness and depression exhibit a significant correlation.

In addition, according to the study by Park (2014), the measured level of happiness and depression conveys a positive relationship with each other. It stated that as the level of happiness arises, they will more likely to experience less anxiety and depression. Furthermore, it predicts that the variables were accountable in influencing the well-being and psychological health of people, as well as of those students.

Discussion

According to all the research literature that has been gathered, there are several factors in considering the relationship between happiness and depression. On the other hand, it establishes the connection of the two variables which explains that both could influence the students' well-being and academic performances. The existing results express the value and relevance of the variables in the various aspects of people, specifically the students.

As a result, students' emotions came from the way they could express their feelings in the response to their current situation. Furthermore, the impact that could be examined from the psychological and emotional state was emphasized. The result on the level of happiness and depression, in reality, demonstrated the evaluation of mediating effect on students' experiences during these trying times of the pandemic, specifically, the implementation of an online learning modality.

Conclusion

With the current situation in pandemic, contemporary online learning creates an immense undesired impact to the happiness of students resulting in conclude depression. Mainly, the higher the depression that students encounter the lower the happiness they will feel and vice versa. With the table and findings above, it only vividly concludes that there is a significant association between happiness and depression among students in any private schools in the Philippines. As mentioned also, the results strongly shows that the null hypothesis is rejected. Reliable numbers of participants were the basis of this study so as to present the findings legitimately.

Therefore, the study highly recommends to properly control and guide the students' provisions and their abilities to cope up in prior with their feeling and well-being. Moreover, the prevention of students from

experiencing depression should be greatly acknowledged and emphasized. To finally conclude, the findings of the study suggests that parents, institutions, and instructors should monitor the students not just with their academic performances but also with their physiological and psychological well-being as to predict and avoid any well-being issues and matters.

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Affiliations and Corresponding Information

Corresponding: Ritz Padilla
Email: padillaritz@jilcf.edu.ph

Ritz Padilla:
Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc.

Kristina Tolosa:
Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc.

Patricia Placiente:
Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc.

Krystle Marie Compuesto:
Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc.

Jhoselle Tus:
Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc.