ABSTRACT
The present study examined the relationship between personality and social factors in happiness disposition among males and females. The sample comprised 500 Indian adolescents with equal number of males and females (n = 250 each) aged between 13 - 17 years from Himachal Pradesh. The results reveal the dominance of personality factors viz., emotional stability and extraversion contributing 19% of variance in happiness in females and personality hardiness and extraversion contributing 23% or variance in males followed by religiosity and social support contributing 6% of variance only in females’ sample. The results further reveal the commonness of extraversion trait in happiness in both the samples.

Key Words: Emotional stability, extraversion, personality hardiness, social support, religiosity, happiness.

The whole world seems to be under the strain of recession, depression and aggression of various kinds and in this entire gamut of uncertainty happiness is regarded as the more important and crucial subject of study especially for adolescents as it is a stage of stresses and strains and storms and strifes.

It is pretty hard to tell what brings happiness because there is no single factor which can make every person happy. Hence, happiness cannot be considered in isolation as universal factors viz., feelings of self-worth, satisfaction, social-support, religiosity etc., can transform one’s happiness. In other words, happiness is not something which one creates or feels.
Various thinkers have defined happiness differently. Happiness is not merely a transient emotional state, short lived and completely dedicated to environmental events (Veenhoven, 1994), rather it is more often conceptualized as personality trait (Costa & McCrae, 1980). Accordingly, happiness is composed of three related components viz., positive affect (joy), absence of negative affect (anger, anxiety and depression, etc.), and satisfaction with life as a whole (Argyle, Martin & Crossland et. al. 1989). Happy people seem to operate on a philosophy of positive thoughts, positive expectations and positive results (Diener & Seligman 2002). They always look at half full and not at half empty glasses.

On the basis of above contentions, it may be deduced that the positive core of psyche is composed of some personality predispositions which are further composed of stability that makes people disposed towards happiness. Studies also indicate that personality traits are highly correlated with happiness and the traits viz., extraversion and emotional stability are prominent among them. Both the factors are partly inherited and the same is true about happiness and empirically it has been observed that extraversion and emotional stability are positively correlated with happiness (Costa & McCrae, 1984; Hills & Argyle, 2001; Thapa, 2008).

Another factor that has positive association with happiness is religion. Pollner (1989) found that closeness to and faith in God correlates highly with happiness. In the same vein other researches (Ellison & George 1994) found that devotional intensity in the form of frequent prayers was the strongest predictor of life satisfaction which is one of the components of happiness.

Further, it is assumed that hardy individuals have better well-being than non-hardy individuals because of a strong sense of commitment, challenge and control which provide the essential courage and motivation to turn stressful circumstances from potential disasters into growth opportunities (Khoshaba, Fazil & Resurreccion, 2009). Another social variable factor that is considered as the backbone of happiness is social support, which provides emotional, economic or instrumental support to depressed people by making their lives happy (Veenhoven 1994; Lu 1997; Gopal 2006). The personality traits including hardness may be the outgrowth of early environment and certain attitudinal factors (Thapa, 2008). Underlining the vitality of these factors, the present study is aimed at testing these formulations to understand the exact variance contributed by the socio-personality factors in positive affect, absence of negative traits and satisfaction summed up as happiness disposition.

**METHOD**

**Sample**

A sample of 500 adolescents from 13-17 years of age took part in the present study. The participants were randomly selected from different schools of Shimla (Himachal Pradesh), India.
In the present investigation, the following research tools have been used:

1. *Oxford Happiness Inventory* (Argyle et. al., 1989): This is a 29 item questionnaire measuring the general psychological causes of happiness including its main components; achievement and satisfaction, enjoyment, vigour and health. It has demonstrated a test-retest reliability correlation coefficient of 0.79 and an alpha of 0.93.

2. *Eysenck Personality Inventory* (Eysenck and Eysenck 1968): This is a 57-item questionnaire out of which 24 items are for neuroticism/emotional stability, 24 for extraversion/introversion and rest of the 9 items are for Lie scale. The questionnaire has been generally used for its psycho-metrically assessed high reliability (0.95) and validity (0.87).

3. *Personal Views Survey III-R* (Maddi and Khoshaba, 2000): Hardiness was assessed by the most recent version of PVS-III test (i.e., the PVS-III R). This test consists of 18 items related to the three hypothesized factors of hardiness: control, commitment, and challenge. Alpha coefficients have been documented between .77 and .81.

4. *Social Support Questionnaire* (Sarason, Levine, Bachman & Sarason 1983): This is a 27-item questionnaire. Each item asks a question for which answer in two parts is requested. The items ask the subject (a) to list the people to whom they can turn and on whom they can rely in a given set of circumstances and (b) indicates how satisfied they are with their social supports on a 6-point Likert scale. Thus, SSQ yields two scores:
   - Perceived availability of the number of supportive persons listed (SSQ-N); and (b) Satisfaction with available support (SSQ-S).
   - The co-efficient of internal reliability is 0.97.

5. Religiosity Scale (Broota and Tagore, 1994): This is a 44-item questionnaire, out of which 25 are positive and 19 are negatively keyed items. The scale is based on Likert's technique of summated ratings. It discriminating between subjects who have strong belief in God and religion, have an attitude of complete submission and obedience to God and those who reject religion and do not feel the need for dependency on a supernatural being. The scale contains items which are not specific to any religion but tap the basic attitude towards God and religion. The split-half reliability of the scale is reported to be 0.96.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results are presented in two sections. In the first section, the zero-order correlations between happiness, personality and social factors are reported. In the second section, the results of step-wise regression analysis testing the
independent effects of personality traits and social factors on happiness are reported.

Correlations between the Socio-Personality Factors and Happiness

Table 1 shows correlations between happiness and socio-personality factors by gender.

**TABLE 1**

Correlations between Happiness and Socio-Personality Factors by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Stability</th>
<th>Females (n=250)</th>
<th>Males (n=250)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Hardiness</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.17**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.16**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01
In both the samples viz., males and females, happiness correlates positively with Emotional Stability (r = .36, .21), Extraversion (r=.25, .33), Personality Hardiness (r=.16, .40), Religiosity (r=.22, .17) and Social support (r=.21, .16). The results further reveal the dominance of personality hardiness and extraversion in males’ happiness and in females’ happiness, the dominance of Emotional Stability and Extraversion followed by Religiosity and Social Support in both the samples. Overall, the findings suggest that happy people possess certain personality and social traits. This raises the possibility that sex might mediate some of the relations between socio-personality factors and happiness.

Effects of the Socio-Personality Factors on Happiness

To examine the independent effects of personality and social factors, multiple regression analysis was conducted separately for females and males. In females’ sample, collectively the personality and social factors accounted for 25% of variance in happiness. Consistent with the zero-order correlations, Emotional Stability (b = .36, R^2 change = 13%) and Extraversion (b =.20 and R^2 change = 6%) had the largest effects followed by Religiosity (b = .18 and R^2 change =3%) and Social Support (b .13 and R^2 change = 3%). Overall, the personality variables have accounted for 19% of variance and social factors have accounted for 6% of variance (See Table 2).

To the contrary, in males’ sample, only personality variables have emerged as the significant predictors of happiness with Personality Hardiness and Extraversion explaining 23% of variance. Consistent with the zero-order correlations, Personality Hardiness (b .40, R^2 change = 16%) and Extraversion (b = .19, R^2 change = 7%) had the largest effects (See Table 3).

On the whole, personality variables are important predictors of happiness but do not account for the majority of variance as other factors also come to
Psycho-social Predictors of Happiness Disposition in the Genders

play their role in happiness viz., social support and religiosity especially in females.

**TABLE 2**

Step-wise Regression Analysis of Personality and Social Factors on Happiness in Females (n=250)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R^2</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>R^2 change</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>6.23**</td>
<td>38.81**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>3.58**</td>
<td>26.71**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>3.20**</td>
<td>21.88**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>2.21**</td>
<td>15.31**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01

**TABLE 3**

Step-wise Regression Analysis of Personality and Social Factors on Happiness in Males (n=250)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R^2</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>R^2 change</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality Hardiness</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>6.01**</td>
<td>25.05**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>3.34**</td>
<td>18.62**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01

The current study established the basic personality and social profile of happy individuals using a representative sample. Happy individuals tend to be extraverted, emotionally stable, hardy, religious and have social support. Though the patterns of relationships are different in males and females, yet, the personality variables dominate the social variables in determining the happiness of individuals, but this in no way under-estimates the variance accounted by the social variables in happiness as they are all significant at .01 level.

The results reveal that emotional stability and not the neuroticism, extraversion and personality hardiness are the main predictors of happiness. It reveals the fact that emotionally stable people are calm, imperturbable, and complain little about their personal worries and anxieties which lead to happiness automatically (DeNeve, 1999). Similarly, extraverts are happy go lucky because of their better social skills, are more assertive and more cooperative (Lischetzke & Eid 2006). It is assumed that the sociability and activity component of extraversion primarily accounts for this relation (Eysenck, 1983; Nettle 2008). They are social by nature and hence act in ways that promote happiness. In the same vein, personality hardiness which has turned out to be the main predictor of happiness in males is due to the fact that hardiness brings forth happiness as hardy individuals can take many things in their stride and can handle many things at a time. Even in this stressful society, they don’t feel powerless, rather they feel the greater sense of control over things, feel committed and view change as challenge even under adverse circumstances. Thus, all these variables make them relaxed and
satisfied, because they have learnt to take the rough with the smooth (Thapa, 2008). Males are reported to be more hardy due to their early socialization practices (Sharma and Malhotra, 2007).

The results further reveal the importance of other social factors which have accounted for significant variance (9%) in happiness. In females, religiosity and social support have also emerged as the predictors of happiness, thereby meaning that religious people are happy and contented with life as compared to non-religious people. Actually, happy people are those who have something to fall back upon and religion is that cushion and hope that provides people support in their thick and thin. Religious beliefs, prayers and faith in God, all help the people to overcome many of the common problems of modern age viz., loneliness, anxiety and unhappiness. Religious beliefs assist the depressed individuals in coping effectively with life crisis (Myers 2000; Gopal 2006). Another important predictor is social support which reveals that friends and relatives are the particular source of happiness (North, Holahan, Moos et al. 2008) as social support provides guidance, assistance and attachment which further provides comport, security, pleasure and sense of identity that has a positive effect on health and ultimately promote happiness and well-being among individuals.

To conclude, besides personality factors, social factors are equally important in determining one’s happiness and hence, offer fruitful avenues for future research.

REFERENCES


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