

Role of mindfulness, belief in personal control, gratitude on happiness among college students

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The purpose of this research is to explore how happiness is influenced by mindfulness, belief in personal control and gratitude. Students of Savitribai Phule Pune University (n=100) with age group ranging from 21-30 years administered Oxford Happiness Questionnaire by Hills and Argyle; Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire by Baer; Belief in Personal Control Scale (BPCS) by Berrenberg and the Gratitude Questionnaire-6 (GQ-6) by McCullough. The association between the variables was tested by Pearson product moment correlation and the best predictors of happiness were predicted by step-wise regression analysis. Results showed positive significant correlation between mindfulness, belief in personal control, gratitude and happiness; gratitude (36%) and mindfulness (13%) were found to be the best predictors of happiness.

Keywords: oxford happiness questionnaire, five facet mindfulness questionnaire, belief in personal control scale

Happiness, the most studied topic in positive psychology is the utmost desire of human beings. Happiness being abstract differs from person to person and also varies on different age levels (Carstensen, 1992). The concept of happiness also varies across various religions. It is quite essential to find out the various determinants of happiness in order to enrich them and enhance the possibility of living human life more happily. So is the present research as a part of contribution towards finding the determinants of happiness with empirical evidence.

Happiness is related to psychological well-being (Ryff, 1997); subjective well-being (Diener, 2000); mindfulness (KabatZinn, 1994; Brown & Ryan, 2003-2004; Wallace, 2005-2006; Wallace & Shapiro, 2006; Walsh & Shapiro, 2006); social support (Everson et al., 1998); self-control (Kobasa, 1982); job satisfaction (Murphy, 1994); as cited in (Baumgardner & Crothers, 2015) "Positive Psychology". Genetics, gender, other demographic variables, personality, life satisfaction, education level are also strongly correlated with happiness.

In the present study mindfulness, personal control and gratitude are correlated with happiness and the best predictors of happiness are found by stepwise regression analysis.

Review of literature

Happiness is a very broad concept. Lot of factors contribute to the overall happiness of a human being. Some of the main factors are namely health, wealth, life satisfaction, morality, spirituality and interpersonal relationships.

Mindfulness, personal control and gratitude play a vital role in contributing in person's happiness. Mindfulness based stress reduction has resulted in increasing happiness in the lives of people (Kabat Zinn, 1990). Walsh and Shapiro (2006) note considerable benefits of mindfulness meditation. Brown and Ryan (2003-2004) as cited in Baumgardner and Crothers (2015) "Positive Psychology" have reported considerable relationship between mindfulness and

improved well-being in their study. Shapiro et al. (2002) found mindfulness increases happiness, physiological, psychological and transpersonal well-being. There were no significant effects of mindfulness on happiness (Sabrina, 2015). Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985); Pavot and Diener (1993); found in their study that gratitude is positively correlated with life satisfaction which is one of the most used measures of Fordyce (1988); Watkins et al. (1997) have found strong correlation between happiness and gratitude. Gratitude played significant role in enhancing the level of happiness in a study by Singh and Salve (2017). In a study by Bowlin and Baer (2012) it was reported that self-control predicts significant variance in psychological health and mindfulness predicts incremental variance showing that mindfulness to outgoing experience can contribute to mental health in persons who are highly self-disciplined and hardworking. Briki (2017) found that trait self-control is one of the key determinants of well-being (Ronen, Hamama, Rosenbaum, & Mishely-Yarlap, 2016). Noted that self-control skills predict higher levels of positive affect.

Method

Participants

100 students with age group ranging from 21 to 30 years (40% male & 60% female) from Savitribai Phule Pune University were selected for the study.

Instruments

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire by (Hills & Argyle, 2001): The test contains 29 questions and measures both subjective and psychological well-being. It measures your current level of happiness. A six point Likert-type scale is used for assessment ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The interpretation is done on six levels of scores viz. 1: Not happy, 2-3: Somewhat happy, 3-4: Not particularly happy or unhappy, 4: Somewhat happy or moderately happy, 4-5: Rather happy or pretty happy and 5-6: Very happy.

Belief in Personal Control Scale Revised Short-form (BPCS-RS) by (Berrenberg, 1991): The BPCS-RS is the short form of the Belief in Personal Control Scale- BPCS (1987). The BPCS-RS is a 45 item

scale rated on a 5 point Likert-type scale anchored at each point with always true, often true, sometimes true, rarely true and never true. Higher scores indicate greater belief in direct control over outcomes whereas lower scores indicate lesser belief in direct control over outcomes.

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) by (Baer, 2006): The FFMQ is a 39-item instrument that uses a 5- point Likert- type scale, ranging from 1 (Never True) to 5 (Always True), to measure dispositional mindfulness across five dimensions: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging, and non-reacting. High scores indicate high level of mindfulness whereas low scores indicate low level of mindfulness.

Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) by (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2001): The self-report questionnaire consists of 6 items designed to assess individual differences to experience gratitude in daily life. The Cronbach's alpha estimates for the six item totals have ranged from .76 to .84 which shows good internal consistency of the questionnaire. Respondents are required to rate each item on a 7 point Likert-type scale (where 1 = strongly disagree & 7 = strongly agree). High scorers are found to be high in the experiences of gratitude whereas low scorers are found to be low in the experience of gratitude.

Research design

It is a correlation and regression study between mindfulness, personal control, gratitude VS happiness by using pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis.

Results and interpretation

After data collection, the scoring of the data was done. Parametric model of data analysis was selected. Details of the data obtained after scoring is shown on Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics: N, mean, SD, on mindfulness, belief in personal control, gratitude and happiness is shown below

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	n
Happiness	127.53	17.82	100
Mindfulness	126.76	14.99	100
BPC	155.96	21.63	100
Gratitude	31.17	5.66	100

Pearson product moment correlation was calculated to find the relation between mindfulness, belief in personal control, gratitude VS happiness. The correlation analysis is shown in Table 2

Table 2: Correlations among variables

	Mindfulness	Happiness	BPC	Gratitude
Mindfulness	1			
Happiness	.56**	1		
BPC	.34**	.43**	1	
Gratitude	.36**	.60**	.43**	1

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

It was reported that mindfulness ($r=.56$), belief in personal control ($r=.43$) and gratitude ($r=.60$) are positively correlated with happiness.

Further, regression analysis was performed to identify the best predictors of happiness. Stepwise regression analysis using

mindfulness, belief in personal control and gratitude as predictors and happiness as criterion. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Stepwise multiple regression analysis using dimensions of mindfulness, belief in personal control and gratitude as predictors and happiness as the criterion for college students $n=100$

Predictors	R ²	Adj. R ²	R ² change	β	t	Sig.
Gratitude	.36	.35	.36	.46	5.91	<.01
Mindfulness	.49	.48	.13	.39	5.05	<.01

Two out of three predictors were analyzed through the regression analysis. The model was statistically significant [$F(2,97)=47.43$, $p<.01$] and accounted for approximately 50% of the variance for happiness among students. Happiness among students was primarily predicted by gratitude ($\beta=.46$, $p<.01$) and mindfulness ($\beta=.39$, $p<.01$). These two factors i.e. gratitude and mindfulness uniquely accounted for approximately 36% and 13% of the variance respectively.

Discussion

Most of the previous studies reported positive relationship between mindfulness, belief in personal control, gratitude and happiness. Present study reveals the same trend. It was also observed that the best predictor of happiness is gratitude followed by mindfulness which is also supported by previous studies. Watkins et al. (1997); and Singh and Salve (2017); have found high positive relationship between gratitude and happiness while Kabat (1990); and Walsh and Shapiro (2006) have found considerable relationship between mindfulness and happiness. Briki (2017) reported positive relationship between self control and well-being.

Gratitude is the quality of being thankful and kind to people, situations and other beings. People who practice gratitude feel content and peaceful. Hence, they experience happiness. Mindfulness is the ability to be attentive. Once one is attentive enough, one can take decisions properly and attentively without having any regrets. Mindful people experience happiness because they are conscious in their way of living. People having high belief in self control are responsible for their actions rather than any supernatural entity. Being responsible enables one to take actions wisely. Therefore, people with high belief in personal control are more happy than the ones who are not.

Conclusion

Mindfulness, belief in personal control and gratitude are positively correlated with happiness. Within these variables gratitude is found to have the highest contribution in happiness followed by mindfulness.

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