

An Evaluation of the Factors Influencing Happiness Among Female Students of Elementary Schools in Tehran

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Abstract— The purpose of the present research was to study the factors influencing happiness and exhilaration among elementary female students of Tehran from the perspectives of teachers and principals in order to define a model to explain this context. This applied survey research, therefore, used a quantitative approach to collect and analyze data required. Population for the study contained all 18990 teachers and principals of the elementary schools in Tehran. A sample population of 377, based on Morgan Table, was selected by use of clustered sampling, 43 principals and 334 teachers. Through review of literature and previous studies, a conceptual model was defined and components creating happiness and exhilaration in schools were recognized in four categories, namely: physical, socio-emotional, individual, and instructional factors. A questionnaire with 66 items was, then, designed by the researcher. Validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts in the field and test of Alpha Cronbach showed a reliability of 0.97 for all the items of the instrument. Factor analysis was used to validate the items in the questionnaire. Chi Square was then used to find out the degree of importance of each category. Physical, socio-emotional, individual, and instructional factors, each with .98, .95.7, .95.4, and .93 received the highest rank in the model, respectively.

Keywords— component; happiness and exhilaration; elementary schools; Tehran; Iran

I. INTRODUCTION

New technology, and those related to information and communication technology in particular, have made preparations for rapid global growth. These changes have created and formed a new world with components that have made a challenging network in which the education system has to benefit in preparing the youth for the future. Such an education system should have a dynamic quality, be changeable and flexible and yet ready to move toward excellence. Exhilarating the schools is one such task of education system.

Reference [1] in his work titled "A place named school" raises the question whether why our schools are not happy places. He then argues that if pupils are asked to list schools' qualities, doubted they will have any symptom of happiness in their lists. Children's mind is open to learn complex issues but schools try to change it into a common experience without happiness. Unless you allow happiness to show, learning experience could be mixed with happiness in school. If you expect children to experience learning process, and if

you expect them to assume school as a happy place, you then need to reengineer curriculum and learning instruction.

Schools are no longer a place for staff employment and examiners, but for educating human beings [2]. To help students enjoy learning experience, one can explain happiness in terms of positive feelings such as pleasure and enjoy.

The results of empirical research do not indicate that there is a comprehensive understanding of the factors involved in conceptualizing the case. The question for the present research is, therefore, whether what the major determinants of forming happy students in elementary schools are.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reference [3] in his book titled: "The eternal happiness" discussed the effectiveness of happiness and enjoyment in life and its role in making a peaceful environment, in improvement of relationships and emotions. Reference [4] in his book titled "What is happiness" argues that there is a relationship between voluntary activities and stress reduction, a stress made due to loneliness.

In a research under the title of "Measures to recognize enjoyable schools, perspectives of female students in junior schools of Tehran", Reference [5] found that such measures as 1. Celebration preparation, 2. Environmental interaction, 3. Good teachers and 4. Students' participation in executive affairs of school, are all among their priorities.

In their research titled "Investigating effective factors in school happiness", Reference [6] found that individual qualities, instructional factors, socio-cultural as well as participative management are all important and effective factors in making schools enjoyable whereas there was found a significant relationship between the perspectives of extra curricular instructors and counselors.

In their study, Reference [7] found that there was no difference between male and female students in views about happiness, but a positive and meaningful difference between happiness and healthiness among all students in general. Yet, in a research conducted by [8] there was found that an emphasis on individual qualities will lead to one's happiness.

In his study on the behavior healthiness among the school age children, Reference [9] found that family's high support, school support and social support as well, will lead students to achieve their identity as well as self gloriousness and, therefore, independence, competency and self-

awareness will be developed among them. The study conducted over 315 children of 9-12 ages, too, showed that 6.5 to 16.5 % of children's happiness could be created by school's spirit [10]. Will self-esteem lead to a better performance, individual success, and happiness with a more healthy life? Reference [11] conducted a research to respond to the question and found that self-esteem had a strong relationship with happiness. Reference [12] reported that schools studied in York Shire were very happy due to the enjoyable curriculum. These schools had offered a lot for learning. Miller's research, quoted in [13], reveals that schools have three components to create happiness. They make a place where children can meet their friends; a place to learn new knowledge; and a place to love, to grow and to plan;

In a research on implementing participative management in a rural school, Reference [14] found that learners, teachers, parents and society would all be happy in a participative leadership.

Reference [15] conducted a research on "Students Happiness" and showed that some factors as students participation in holding the control over learning environment, providing services to others, taking responsibilities would lead to improving their creativity and self-esteem and happiness.

Reference [16] found that desirable instruction would have direct and positive effect on both students attitude towards success approach, and on achieving self-esteem and self-confidence.

Reference [17] argues that communication in school has a direct correlation with spiritual health and happiness of students. Accordingly, students' participation in school activities will lead to positive experiences towards happiness. Reference [18] states that socialization is one among the methods to reach happiness. The relationship of school activities and students happiness has been considered by other researchers as well [19], [20].

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on literature reviewed and previous studies, a model could be defined with four categories, namely physical, social-emotional, individual, and instructional, to show the factors influencing happiness in schools.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effective items in each category of creating happiness?
2. How does each determinant stand in rank of order of impact creating happiness?

V. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive method was selected to analyze the data collected for the present survey research. Statistical population was all 18990 teachers and principals of elementary female schools of Tehran in 2010 academic year. A sample population of 377, based on Morgan Table, was selected by use of clustered sampling, 43 principals and 334 teachers (Table. I). Instrument to collect data was a

researcher designed questionnaire based on the literature reviewed. Validity of the instrument was confirmed by experts in the field and its reliability was tested by Alpha Chronbach with 0.97. The instrument contained 66 items with 5 degrees Likert Scale. Chi Square was run to find out the priority ranks of the components.

VI. FINDINGS

Question1. Based on the literature review, 66 components were recognized. Factor analysis was run to determine the effective components of creating happiness. All items showed to be effective in making happiness.

Question2. Chi Square was run to find out the status of components in ranks of order. The findings showed that physical components with 98%, emotional-social components with 95.7%, individual components with 95.4%, and academic components with 93% received the highest and lowest rank in the model.

TABLE I. TOTAL MEAN FOR THE DESIRED VALUES OF THE FACTORS

Situation	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Desired	377	298.19	28.361

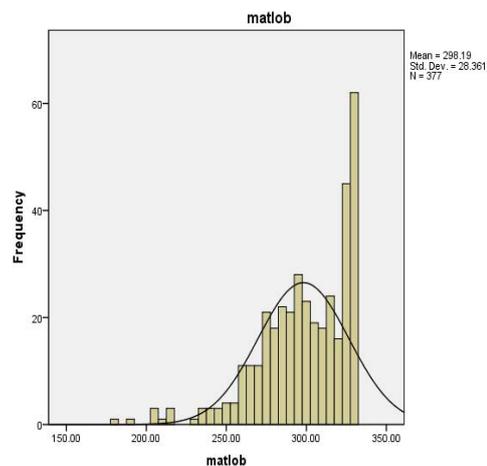


Figure 1. Diagram for the distribution of values in the desired status

TABLE II. FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES BASED ON THE RANK OF ORDER OF FACTORS AFFECTING HAPPINESS

Effective Factors		Physical	Socio-emotional	Individual	Academic
Frequency observed	average	5	16	17	25
	large	372	361	360	352
Frequency expected	average	188.5	188.5	188.5	188.5
	large	188.5	188.5	188.5	188.5
Residuals	average	183.5	172.5	171.5	163.5

	<i>large</i>	183.5	172.5	171.5	163.5
Df		1	1	1	1
Chi Square		357.26	315.76	312.06	283.63
Sig		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
%		98	95.7	95.4	93

VII. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study are in consistency with that of [4] where he emphasizes the relationship of voluntary activities with the reduction of stress. The results of the present study also confirm the findings of [18] where he states that socialization is one way of achieving happiness; the more the social activities, the happier the individuals will be in school. In his research, Reference [21] showed that school principals and teachers emphasized the social and physical as well as organizational factors to be important in creating happiness among students. Reference [22] confirmed that the impact of organizational environment and participation in class learning activities in creating happiness are very important.

The present study showed that academic factors are important in creating happiness. The findings of [23] support findings of the present research regarding the effect of miscellaneous programs on happiness and exhilaration.

Findings of a research conducted by [24] support the idea that there is a positive and direct relationship between academic achievement and happiness. It also shows a positive relationship between exhilaration and safety in school.

Findings of [25] supported the findings of the present study where physical factors and participative and supportive leadership style were important in creating happiness in school.

The findings of [6] are in consistent with the findings of the present research in terms of the effect of individual, academic, socio-cultural and physical factors of schools in providing happiness and exhilaration.

In terms of defining measures for a happy school, findings of a research conducted by [5] support findings of the present study that show performance of ceremonies in school, participation of students in school administration are all important factors in providing happiness in school.

Reference [7] found that there was no difference between male and female students in terms of the need for happiness in school. The findings of a research [8] showed that there was a strong and positive relationship between happiness and self-esteem. Their findings, therefore, support the results of the present study in terms of the effect of individual factors in creating happiness.

The findings of [11], too, are in support of the relationship between individual characteristics and happiness. The findings of the present research in terms of the effect of socio-emotional factors as well as academic factors in happiness, are consistent with the results of a research

conducted by [16], [17], [26], [27]; Accordingly, athletic activities, social practices, music and art, social honors, academic achievements, and school communication, are all effective factors in creating happiness in school. Curriculum will not only affect students' attitudes towards school and learning environment, but will also affect students happiness.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION

Schools are part of daily life of students. Elementary students need to be happy while in schools. The present research was conducted to design a model to explain the factors affecting students' happiness in elementary schools. Components confirmed by factor analysis were categorized into physical, emotional-social, individual and academic factors. Literature supported the findings of the results of this research. Teachers and school principals' perspectives explained how schools can help providing happiness among students. Yet there might be a distance between what are expected from schools and what are observed. School authorities, therefore, need to revise their learning programs as well as physical possibilities implemented in schools. Happiness will make positive attitudes among students and may lead to a higher academic achievement and eventually more active citizens.

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