

# Effect of Gender and Residence on Self Esteem and Happiness of Students

## Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate effect of gender and residence on self esteem and happiness level of students. For this, 120 boys and girls students were taken; half of them were living in hostel and half of them in their home. All students were studying in undergraduate and post graduate classes. Hostel life has many advantages and disadvantages for the students. Many students adjust well themselves in hostel life and do well in their studies and remain happy. While some others hostellers find it difficult to live away from home and are constantly disturbed. They are unable to focus on study and remain unhappy too. Self esteem is found to be correlated with happiness in earlier researches. Questionnaires were used to measure self esteem, and happiness level of participants. Result shows that self esteem had no significant impact on hosteller and non- hosteller. It was also non significant for gender too but hostellers was found better than non-hostellers. Hostellers were found to be happier than non- hostellers but girls students were more happy than boys in both samples whether they were hostellers or non- hostellers. Thus the effect of residence was not found significant in the study, only the effect of gender was found significant.

**Keywords:** Self Esteem, Happiness, Autonomy, Gender, Environmental Mastery.

## Introduction

This study investigates the effect of gender and place of residence on self esteem and happiness level of students. Greater consensus exists regarding the definition of self-esteem. Self-esteem has been defined as a global feeling of self-worth or adequacy as a person, or generalized feelings of self acceptance, goodness, and self-respect (Coppersmith, 1967; Crocker and Major, 1989; Rosenberg, 1965, Wylie, 1979). This global, personal judgment of worthiness is characterized as the evaluative component of the self (e.g., J. D. Campbell, 1990), and as distinct from collective or racial self-esteem (Crocker and Major, 1989). According to Epstein (1973), people have a basic need for self-esteem, and, at least in Western cultures, they use numerous strategies to maintain it (Dunning et al., 1995; Taylor and Brown, 1988; cf. Diener and Diener, 1995; Markus and Kitayama, 1991). A self-esteem form early in the course of development, remains fairly constant over time, and is relatively immune to change (J. D. Campbell, 1990).

## Review of Literature

### Self-Esteem and Related Psychological Constructs

Most investigations of self-esteem have been concerned with the thoughts, moods, and actions — often observed in college students in the laboratory — that are associated with high versus low levels of the construct (e.g., Crocker and Major, 1989). For example, relative to people with low self-esteem, those with high self-esteem have been found to possess clearer self-concepts (J. D. Campbell and Lavelle, 1993); to be less vulnerable to depression (e.g., Harter, 1993; Tennen and Affleck, 1993; see also Kernis et al., 1993) and anxiety (Fleming and Courtney, 1984); to be more resilient to self-image threats (Spencer et al., 1993); and to be more likely to savor positive affect (Wood et al., 2003), to persist in the face of failure (DiPaula and J. D. Campbell, 2002), and to perceive negative feedback as a challenge rather than a threat (Seery et al., 2004). It should be noted, however, that little empirical research on self-esteem has been conducted with the elderly, who were the subject of our study.

### Agency and Competence

Although less research has addressed the relationship between self-esteem and stable, dispositional constructs, some clues regarding the source of feelings of self-worth are provided in theoretical accounts

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of self-esteem. For example, according to one theoretical perspective, self-esteem is gained through efficacious and successful navigation of one's environment, whereby one acquires a sense of control, competence, and ability (Bandura, 1977; Crocker and Major, 1989; cf. Van Tuinen and Ramanaiah, 1979). Furthermore, according to a developmental perspective, self-worth is derived from having a sense of competence in domains that are valued by the individual and important significant others (Harter, 1993). Thus, self-esteem would be expected to be closely linked with a sense of agency or mastery Happiness and Self-Esteem and control of one's environment. Indeed, the notion that a sense of personal control is critical to self-concept and self-esteem has been endorsed by a number of theorists (e.g., Fenichel, 1945; Heider, 1958; White, 1959; see Taylor and Brown, 1988, for a review).

#### **Positive Expectations**

Self-esteem is also highly correlated with optimism and lack of hopelessness in college students (Lucas et al., 1996; Scheier et al., 1994; see also Tennen and Affleck, 1993). Optimists anticipate bright futures and expect favorable outcomes for their actions. Thus, one might expect optimists to persist longer and harder through life's tasks and challenges, creating self-fulfilling prophecies, and, consequently, bolstering their self-regard. In sum, it would appear that self-esteem is strongly related to motivational constructs such as optimism, mastery, and competence – that is, feelings that one is a competent agent, capable of success.

The second variable investigated the study was happiness. Howard Mumford Jones once said that "happiness...belongs to that category of words, the meaning of which everybody knows but the definition of which nobody can give" (cited in Freedman, 1978). Although happiness may have different meanings for different people, most agree that it is a "glow" word (Parducci, 1995) – that is, a pervasive and lasting sense that life is fulfilling, meaningful, and pleasant (Myers, 1992). To study this sometimes elusive construct, researchers have achieved a modest amount of agreement on how it should be measured and defined. The most widely-accepted definition is that of Diener and his colleagues, who prefer to use the label subjective well-being, defining it as a combination of life satisfaction (a cognitive judgment) and the balance of the frequency of positive and negative affect (i.e., hedonic tone) (Diener, Larsen et al., 1985, 1991).

Making the assumption that most people know whether they are happy, a number of researchers have allowed the individuals being measured to define happiness for themselves (e.g., Happiness and Self-Esteem 5 Gurin et al., 1960; Kozma and Stones, 1980; Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 1999). This assumption is also made here. Most people are capable of reporting on their own global happiness, and this judgment is not necessarily equivalent to a simple aggregate of their recent levels of affect and ratings of life satisfaction (or, reports of their resources). For example, one may conceivably consider oneself a very happy person, despite leading

only a somewhat happy life or not typically experiencing more positive than negative emotions. Thus, for our measure of happiness in the present study, we use global, subjective assessments of whether one is a happy or unhappy individual (Lyubomirsky, 2001; Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 1999).

#### **Correlates of Happiness Traits and Dispositions**

Typically, personality traits account for as much as 40% to 50% of the proportion of the variability in well-being (Diener et al., 1999); thus, traits and dispositions appear to be critical to happiness. According to Myers and Diener (1995), four traits consistently characterize happy people: self-esteem (e.g., Diener and Diener, 1995; Fordyce, 1988; Kozma and Stones, 1978), optimism (A. Campbell, 1981; Carver and Gaines, 1987), extraversion (Brebner et al., 1995; Costa and McCrae, 1980; Costa et al., 1981; Emmons and Diener, 1985; Headey and Wearing, 1989; Pavot et al., 1990), and a sense of personal mastery or control (Csikszentmihalyi and Wong, 1991; Grob et al., 1999; Ryff, 1989). Thus, in general, happy individuals have social, outgoing personalities, as well as positive feelings about themselves, their sense of mastery, and the future. They are also more likely to be active and energetic and less likely to be neurotic (DeNeve and Cooper, 1998). These attitudes can be self-fulfilling, leading happy people to experience more positive events (e.g., Headey and Wearing, 1989; Magnus et al., 1993) and more fulfilling social relationships, which can further enhance well-being. McCrae and Costa (1991) proposed two ways that traits might influence well-being – temperamental and instrumental. The temperamental sequence is illustrated by a trait leading to a mood, and then, in turn, both trait and mood bearing on happiness (Costa and McCrae, 1980; McCrae and Costa, 1991). Similarly, Rusting (1998) posited that traits predispose people to interpret events in a dispositional congruent manner. Thus, happy people's positive attitudes and judgments may lead them to perceive life experiences in a way that sustains their positive moods (e.g., Lyubomirsky and Tucker, 1998; cf. Lyubomirsky, 2001) – for example, by perceiving control in their actions or by construing value in daily life events. Notably, experimental evidence supports the temperamental sequence for both extraversion and neuroticism. Specifically, results show that extraverted individuals seem to experience positive events as more intensely positive than do introverts, whereas individuals high in neuroticism seem to experience negative events more negatively than do their more emotionally-stable peers (Larsen and Ketelaar, 1991). Happiness and Self-Esteem 7 In contrast, the instrumental causal sequence is illustrated by the notion that particular traits compel people towards certain situations, which lead to later happiness or unhappiness. The empirical evidence supports this sequence as well. For example, in a recent study, the relation between extraversion and happiness was partially mediated by social affiliation and active leisure activities (Tkach and Lyubomirsky, 2005). Even more convincing is a study of personality and

daily activities that found that extraverts chose to spend more time in social situations than did introverts, and that extraverts experienced greater positive affect during chosen social situations than during imposed solitary ones (Emmons et al., 1986).

**Social Affiliation**

One of the most important sources of happiness is personal relationships (Argyle, 1987, Diener, 1984; Kahana et al., 1995; Myers, 1992; Myers and Diener, 1995; Ryff, 1989). Numerous studies support a link between happiness and friendship, marriage, intimacy, and social support (e.g., see Lyubomirsky, King, et al., in press, for a review). For example, one study showed that those who named five or more friends with whom they discussed important matters in the last six months were 60% more likely to report being “very happy” (cited in Myers, 1992; see also Henderson et al., 1981). Indeed, people are happiest when with friends (Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter, 2003). Also, happy people are more likely to have friends who encourage and support them (Myers, 1992). A number of studies suggest that close friendships can help buffer stress (Reis, 1984) and avert distress due to loneliness, anxiety, boredom, and loss of self-esteem (Peplau and Perlman, 1982; see Argyle, 1987). Not surprisingly, loneliness is inversely correlated with happiness, especially in older adults (Lee and Ishii-Kuntz, 1987), and positively correlated with depression (Peplau and Perlman, 1982; Seligman, 1991; Weeks et al., 1980).

**Positive Moods**

The experience of happiness is marked by more frequent positive affective states than negative ones (Bradburn, 1969; Diener et al., 1991; Diener, Larsen et al., 1985). Indeed, the possibility exists that because people may rely on their moods at the time of judgment to simplify the complex task of appraising their happiness (Schwarz and Bohner, 1996; Schwarz and Clore, 1983), such appraisals may be affected by transient moods. However, although happiness reports are somewhat dependent on mood, they are in fact relatively stable, with good long-term Happiness and Self-Esteem 8 reliability (see Diener, 1994, for a review). Furthermore, daily mood is not consistently correlated with happiness (Diener et al., 1999; Lucas et al., 1996; Lyubomirsky and Tucker, 1998), does not predict outcomes over and above levels of happiness (e.g., Lyubomirsky and Ross, 1997; Lyubomirsky and Tucker, 1998; Seidlitz and Diener, 1993), and peer reports of well-being predict current well-being better than does transient mood (Pavot and Diener, 1993). Thus, the evidence suggests that both current mood and long-term affect are reflected in measures of happiness (Diener, 1984). In addition, when people are asked to describe how they decide whether they are happy, the decisions are predominantly based on affect (Ross et al., 1986).

**Satisfaction with Life**

Since subjective well-being is commonly defined as an aggregate of life satisfaction and the balance of affect, it is not surprising that happy individuals demonstrate both global satisfaction with

their lives (see Argyle, 1987; Diener, 1984; Myers and Diener, 1995, for reviews) and satisfaction within specific life domains, such as work, recreation, friendship, marriage, health, and the self (Argyle, 1987; A. Campbell, 1981; Diener et al., 1999; Eysenck, 1990; Lepper, 1996). An influential “top-down” view is that happiness influences one’s outlook, which “colors” one’s perceptions of specific domains (Feist et al., 1995; Stones and Kozma, 1986; Veenhoven, 1997). However, evidence also suggests that happiness results in part from a summation of various domains of satisfaction (Feist et al., 1995).

**Satisfaction of Psychological Needs**

Although a large number of psychological needs have been proposed, recently researchers have begun to focus on three universal needs – competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Regardless of the number of needs put forward, however, theorists agree that the satisfaction of needs is related to well-being (e.g., Maslow, 1970; Omodei and Wearing, 1990; Rogers, 1961), and research supports this relationship. For example, a diary study demonstrated that people’s self-reported “good days” were days in which they were feeling above their baseline in competency and autonomy – that is, they felt capable and self motivated (Sheldon et al., 1996). Research provides additional support for this linkage at the daily level (Reis et al., 2000), as well as for longer-term periods (e.g., Omodei and Wearing, 1990; Sheldon and Elliot, 1999).

**Aim of the Study**

The main aims of the study may be summarized as:

1. To examine the self esteem of hostellers and non- hostellers boys and girls
2. To examine the happiness of hostellers and non- hostellers boys and girls
3. To examine the of hostellers and non- hostellers boys and girls

**Method**

Sample consisted of 120 undergraduate and post graduate students having 30 hostler boys, 30 hostler girls, 30 non- hosteller boys, 30 non hosteller girls. All students were of age from 18 to 24 years.

Residence	Gender	Number of participant
Hosteller	Male	30
	Female	30
	Total	60
Non Hosteller	Male	30
	Female	30
	Total	60
<b>Grand Total</b>		120

**Tools**

A questionnaire were used to measured-

**Self-esteem**

The scale consist 9 items using and scoring is for positive 3, 2, 1, 0 and negative items 0, 1, 2, 3.

**Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)**

The scale consist 4 items using and scoring is for positive 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and negative items 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

**Procedure**

All participants were contacted personally with prior consent. The questionnaires were administered very minutely. The participants took interest in filling the questionnaires. After getting back filled questionnaires, these were checked that all participants have given their answer to each and every question or not.

**Result and Discussion**

**Self-Esteem**

In hosteller Self-esteem was found higher in female ( $M \pm SD = 17.67 \pm 4.6$ ) in compare to male ( $M \pm SD = 16.77 \pm 3.6$ ). While, in Non hosteller Self-esteem was found higher in female ( $M \pm SD = 17.83 \pm 4.3$ ) in compare to male ( $M \pm SD = 16.63 \pm 3.9$ ). Furthermore, the data were submitted to 2 (residence)  $\times$  2 (gender) analyses of variance to examine interaction effects, if any. The findings obtained after ANOVA is presented in Table 28. The findings of ANOVA indicated that the interaction effect of residence  $\times$  gender was found not significant ( $F_{(1,116)} = .039, p = .844, \eta_p^2 = .000$ ). The main effect of residence was found not significant ( $F_{(1,116)} = .000, p = .983, \eta_p^2 = .000$ ). Moreover, main effect of gender was found not significant ( $F_{(1,116)} = 1.895, p = .171, \eta_p^2 = .016$ ).

**Table 01: Means and Standard Deviations of Self-Esteem Measure as a Function of Residence and Gender**

Residence	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Hosteller	Male	16.77	3.683	30
	Female	17.67	4.693	30
	Total	17.22	4.207	60
Non Hosteller	Male	16.63	3.926	30
	Female	17.83	4.340	30
	Total	17.23	4.147	60
Total	Male	16.70	3.775	60
	Female	17.75	4.482	60
	Total	17.22	4.160	120

**Table 02: Summary of Analysis of Variance on Self-Esteem**

Source	SS	df	Mean Square	F-Value	Sig
Between Groups					
A: Residence	.008	1	.008	.000	.983
B: Gender	33.075	1	33.075	1.895	.171
A x B	.675	1	.675	.39	.844
Error	2025.167	116	17.458		

**Subjective Happiness Scale**

In hosteller Subjective Happiness Scale was found higher in female ( $M \pm SD = 18.33 \pm 3.38$ ) in compare to male ( $M \pm SD = 17.63 \pm 3.15$ ). While, in Non hosteller Subjective Happiness Scale was found higher in female ( $M \pm SD = 18.27 \pm 4.5$ ) in compare to male ( $M \pm SD = 15.87 \pm 3.5$ ). Furthermore, the data were submitted to 2 (residence)  $\times$  2 (gender) analyses of variance to examine interaction effects, if any. The findings obtained after ANOVA is presented in Table 30. The findings of ANOVA indicated that the interaction effect of residence  $\times$  gender was found not

significant ( $F_{(1,116)} = 1.576, p = .212, \eta_p^2 = .013$ ). The main effect of residence was found not significant ( $F_{(1,116)} = 1.833, p = .178, \eta_p^2 = .016$ ). Moreover, main effect of gender was found also significant ( $F_{(1,116)} = 5.24, p = .024, \eta_p^2 = .043$ ).

**Table 03: Means and Standard Deviations of Subjective Happiness Scale measure as a function of Residence and Gender**

Residence	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Hosteller	Male	17.63	3.157	30
	Female	18.33	3.387	30
	Total	17.98	3.265	60
Non Hosteller	Male	15.87	3.530	30
	Female	18.27	4.593	30
	Total	17.07	4.238	60
Total	Male	16.75	3.438	60
	Female	18.30	4.001	60
	Total	17.53	3.795	120

**Table 04: Summary of Analysis of Variance on Subjective Happiness Scale**

Source	SS	Df	Mean Square	F-Value	Sig
Between Groups					
A: Residence	25.208	1	25.208	1.833	.178
B: Gender	72.075	1	72.075	5.242	.024
A x B	21.675	1	21.675	1.576	.212
Error	1594.967	116	13.750		

The study shows that hostellers had more self esteem than the non- hostellers. Girl students had more self esteem than boy students (Table 1 and Table 2). On the whole, girl students had higher self esteem than boy students. It appears that higher self esteem helps girls to possess clear self image and endurance. Such results have been found in many researches. J. D. Campbell and Lavellee (1993) found that people with high self esteem poses clear self concept as compared to people with low self esteem. Female were found more likely to savor positive affect (Wood et al, 2012). Female are not easily disturbed by difficult situation. They accept the challenges of life more courageously than male. Physically they might appear less strong than male but psychologically they are stronger and happier.

Table 3 and table 4 also show that hosteller students had higher self esteem than non- hosteller students. It has been seen clearly in girls and boys students. Hostel life is comparatively tough than life in home. In hostel students learn to live independently and develop their own thinking and approach towards life. They start to reason and to more analytical and critical. That is why hosteller students have high self esteem.

For happiness too, girl students had the reported high than boy students. Since girls have higher self esteem, it helps them be happier too. Similar results have been found in many researches. Myers and Diener (1995) have described four traits of happy people: self esteem, optimism, extraversion and sense of personal mastery. Thus, in general, happy individuals have socially outgoing personality

as well as positive feeling about themselves; sense of mastery and the future. This is what happened in the present study. The girl students are happier than boy students because they have more self esteem, optimism, extraversion and a sense of personal control. They have more strong social relationships too. Students have reported that having more friends is an important source of happiness (Argyle, 1987), Diener (1984), Ryff (1989). Friends help in handling stresses of the students' life (Reis, 1984). They refrain them from loneliness, anxiety and frustration of students' life.

#### Conclusion

Hostellers were found happier than non-hostellers (Table 3 and Table 4). Since hostellers have higher self esteem and more friends of the same age group, they remain happier. Peplau and Perlman (1982), Argyle (1987) have reported that close friendship can avert distress due to loneliness, anxiety, boredom and less self esteem. Non hosteller students do not have that kind of friends and social relationships. That is why loneliness is found inversely correlated with happiness and positively correlated with depression, Peplau and Perlman (1982), Seligman (1991). Thus higher self esteem and close friend circle enable hostellers to be more stress free and happier.

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