

HAPPINESS OF ADOLESCENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR SOCIAL MATURITY

Jasleen Kaur

Asst. Prof.

GHG Khalsa College of Education, Gurusar Sadhar, Ludhiana

ABSTRACT

In the present study the investigator has analysed the relationship between Happiness and Social maturity as a whole and across its various dimensions-Personal adequacy, Interpersonal adequacy and social adequacy of adolescents. Sample for the present study comprised of 5 rural and urban.Govt. Sen. Sec. Schools of Ludhiana district. The method of descriptive research was adopted by the investigator in the present study. The analytical approach was used to study the relationship between happiness and social maturity in adolescents. The results revealed significant positive correlation between Happiness and Social maturity (Total sample) as well as Happiness across various dimensions of social maturity.

Introduction

Adolescence is derived from Latin word *adolescere* it means to grow up and to grow into maturity. It is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development during the period between puberty to legal age of maturity. Developing and maintaining identity (in adolescent years) is a difficult task due to multiple factors such as family life, environment, and social status. If their problems remain unaddressed or in case of wrong handling the personality growth and self confidence of adolescents can be deeply affected. They might suffer developmental and behavioural issues leading to general unhappiness and remorse.

Happiness

Within every classification of fundamental human emotions, Happiness consistently appears in the form of joy. Attaining Happiness serves as a vital life objective for most individuals, and it remains a heavily prioritized aspiration across global cultures. Given our inherently communal nature, individuals who possess robust support systems consisting of family and friends frequently achieve higher levels of personal Happiness and life accomplishments.

According to Myers and Diener (1995), the concept of Happiness encompasses regular feelings of joy, satisfaction, and overall wellness, paired with the internal conviction that one's existence is purposeful, constructive, and significant. They emphasize that because Happiness is entirely personal, its presence can ultimately only be evaluated by the individual experiencing it.

Similarly, Lyubomirsky (2001) characterizes Happiness as a combination of pleasant emotions, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being, unified by the perspective that an individual's life holds genuine value and meaning.

To put it another way, Happiness represents an internal state of satisfaction, delight, or general well-being. Individuals frequently experience this emotion when they attain success, find themselves in secure environments, or benefit from good fortune. However, the root causes of Happiness vary significantly from person to person. A multitude of demographic and environmental variables—such as gender, financial standing, marital status, educational background, occupational fulfillment, and health literacy—are considered primary determinants of human well-being. Among these diverse elements, an adolescent's level of social maturity stands out as a critical factor influencing their

overall Happiness.

Social Maturity

The acquisition of social maturity is an intricate, multi-layered journey. At its core, it involves recognizing appropriate behavioral choices across various contexts. This developmental path shapes an individual's enduring habits, behavioral tendencies, outlooks, social etiquette, and practical life skills. The household functions as the primary socialization environment for a young child, introducing them to fundamental interpersonal abilities and helping them decipher complex social settings.

As observed by Raj (1996), social maturity indicates the depth of an individual's interpersonal competence and social consciousness relative to the established expectations of their specific age cohort. It acts as a benchmark for assessing a person's developmental progress in areas like relationship management, situational decorum, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Within this framework, social responsibility functions as an essential component, manifested through an individual's dedication to societal guidelines and expected community roles.

Influenced by Jean Piaget's structural stage frameworks, Harvard developmental psychologist Robert Kegan (1984) formulated an independent stage theory. Kegan's model concentrates specifically on the mechanisms through which individuals attain social maturity. This approach looks at maturation through a distinct environmental and interpersonal lens, intentionally separating the process from standard chronological or biological growth.

Attaining social maturity grants individuals the capacity to form sound assessments, arrive at firm choices, and implement constructive solutions when dealing with disputes or turning points. Furthermore, it allows people to engage in collaborative efforts seamlessly, preventing unnecessary friction with peers. Social maturity also encourages individuals to accept full accountability for their choices and to successfully fulfill their obligations in various community settings.

According to Zav (2022), this maturity assists teenagers in building expansive networks of genuine companionships, as the young person learns to align with collective goals and prioritize community advantages over personal self-interest. This trait manifests through various prosocial behaviors, including peer alignment, empathy, sportsmanship, emotional stability, manners, reliability, self-assurance, teamwork, leadership potential, and an optimistic outlook.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Argyle et al. (1989) studied the dimensions of positive emotions and revealed that happiness comprised three main components: 1. The frequency and degree of positive affect; 2. The average level of satisfaction and 3. The absence of negative feelings such as depression and anxiety.

Joy and Aji (2019) studied the relationship between emotional maturity and happiness among emerging adults within the age group of 18-25. The result of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between emotional maturity and happiness among emerging adults. Women are more emotionally mature than men and there is no significant difference in happiness among men and women.

Arnab (2014) conducted study on adjustment of ability and social maturity between secondary school students in West Bengal. The finding shows that there is a significant difference in adjustment ability and social maturity in relation to their gender, strata and social economic status and there is a significant correlation between the adjustment ability and social maturity.

Vijay and Thilagavathy (2014) conducted study on career decision making and social maturity of graduate students and found that the career decision making of graduate students is at moderate level. Also the graduate students are moderately mature and there is no significant relation between career

decision making and social maturity.

Shanmuganathi (2020) analysed the level of Social Maturity among B.Ed. Student- Teachers in the College of Education. The Major findings of the study were i) The level of Social Maturity among B.Ed. Student- Teachers in Colleges of Education are average. ii) Both Male and Female B.Ed. Student – teachers are having a similar level of Social Maturity. iii) Both Rural and urban B.Ed. Student – teachers are having a similar level of Social Maturity and iv) Both Arts and Science B.Ed. Student – teachers are having a similar level of Social Maturity.

A careful appraisal of the above literature helped to conclude that happiness has been studied with many other variables like satisfaction, cognition, self esteem, emotional intelligence, social relations, emotional maturity and has been found to be related to these variables. Similarly social maturity has also been found related to sociability, behaviour, personality, adjustment and decision making, but interestingly the investigator could not locate any study on happiness in relation to social maturity, especially for the state of Punjab and particularly in Ludhiana district. Hence through the present study, the investigator has made an attempt to explore the relationship between happiness and social maturity of adolescents of Ludhiana district.

Hypotheses

1. There exists no significant relationship between Happiness and social maturity among adolescents.
2. There exists no significant relationship between Happiness and personal adequacy dimension of social maturity among adolescents.
3. There exists no significant relationship between Happiness and inter-personal adequacy dimension of social maturity among adolescents.
4. There exists no significant relationship between Happiness and social adequacy dimension of social maturity among adolescents.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Sample

Sample for the present study comprised of 5 Govt. Sen. Sec. Schools of Ludhiana district. It included both rural and urban schools. Both girls and boys were included in the data. A total of 100 students were taken for the present study.

Tools used

1. H-scale by Bharadwaj and Das (2017)
2. Rao's social maturity scale by Rao (2006).

Statistical Analysis of Data

The descriptive statistical techniques of mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis were used for studying the nature of distribution scores. Coefficient of correlation was used to predict the relation between happiness and social maturity.

Method and Procedure

The method of descriptive research is adopted by the investigator in the present study. The analytical approach was used to study the relationship between happiness and social maturity in adolescents. The data for the present study was collected from 100 students of senior secondary school in Ludhiana district. Scoring of each variable was done with the help of their respective manuals.

RESULTS

Relationship between Happiness and Social Maturity

The table 1 given below shows the mean scores of Happiness (total sample) and social Maturity and also the correlation between the two variables

Table:1

Mean scores and coefficient of correlation of happiness (Total sample) and Social Maturity among adolescents.(Total sample)

Variable	N	Mean score for Total Sample	Coefficient of correlation (r)
Happiness	100	94.81	0.57**
Social Maturity	100	220.42	

** Significant at 0.01 level.

The above table shows the coefficient of correlation (product moment method) between happiness and social maturity is 0.57.

Checking this value against critical table value of r, it comes out clearly that the obtained correlation is significant. Therefore it implies that the two variables are highly correlated. Social maturity of adolescents is correlated with their happiness. Further checking the levels and direction of correlation, it is seen that happiness and social maturity have strong positive correlation. Hereby implying that higher social maturity leads to higher happiness and vice versa. So the hypothesis no. 1 "There exists no significant relationship between happiness and social maturity among adolescents" stands rejected.

The reason behind such a finding could be that social maturity brings ability to make judgements, decisions and take proper action in face of problems and critical issues. It also enables an individual to participate in cooperative activities without conflict with others. Further social maturity helps to assume responsibility for one's own actions, and also to efficiently discharge the roles assigned in different social situations. This helps the adolescent to make a larger circle of sincere friends as the adolescent identifies with the interests of the group and puts the group benefits before his selfish gains (Zav, 2022). Such a position definitely increases the levels of happiness of the individual.

Relationship between happiness (total sample) and social maturity (dimension wise) among adolescents

The table given below shows the mean scores of happiness (Total sample) and social maturity (dimension wise). The coefficient of correlation (product moment method) between the two variables has also been calculated.

Table:2

Table Mean scores and coefficient of correlation of happiness (total sample) and social maturity (dimension wise) among adolescents

Variable	N	Mean score for Total Sample	Coefficient of correlation (r)
Happiness	100	94.81	0.49**
Personal Adequacy	100	69.1	
Happiness	100	94.81	0.55**
Inter-personal Adequacy	100	70.81	

Happiness	100	94.81	0.61**
Social Adequacy	100	71.32	

** Significant at 0.01 level.

The above table shows the coefficient of correlation (product moment method) between happiness and personal adequacy dimension of social maturity which comes out to be 0.49. Comparing this value against critical table value of r, it clearly shows that the obtained correlation is significant. Therefore, it implies that the two variables are correlated. Personal adequacy dimension of social maturity of adolescents is correlated with their happiness. Further checking the levels and direction of correlation, it is seen that happiness and personal adequacy dimension of social maturity have weak positive correlation. Hereby implying that increase in personal adequacy leads to some increase in happiness and vice versa. So the hypothesis no. 1(a) "There exists no significant relationship between happiness and personal adequacy dimension of social maturity among adolescents" stands rejected.

Such a finding can be explained as personal adequacy dimension of social maturity includes three sub-domains. First domain is work orientation which manifests in the perception of work related skills and development of proper attitudes towards work in terms of knowledge of standards of competence in performing tasks, capacity for experiencing pleasure in work leading to self-sufficiency. Another domain is self-direction which is one's own capacity to independently act and exercise control over one's action. This also involves the initiative an individual takes in directing himself and his actions with a feeling of security and full faith in one's efforts. The third domain is ability to take stress which is an ability to exhibit appropriate emotional stability and react without embarrassing either himself or the group he is in. It also involves ability to undertake difficult and challenging tasks with assurance (Greenberger et al. 1974 & Rao, 2006). This implies that adolescents with high personal adequacy are high on these domains and hence experience satisfying situation in work/studies are self directed and are able to manage stress which definitely raises their scores on personal adequacy which in turn leads to more happiness.

Further the above table also shows the coefficient of correlation (product moment method) between happiness and interpersonal adequacy dimension social maturity comes out to be 0.55.

The obtained value of correlation is compared with critical table value of r, and is found to be significant. Therefore, it implies that the two variables are correlated. Interpersonal adequacy dimension of social maturity of adolescents is correlated with their happiness. While checking the levels and direction of correlation, it is seen that happiness and interpersonal adequacy dimension of social maturity have moderate positive correlation. Hereby implying that higher the interpersonal adequacy higher will be the happiness of the individual and vice versa. So the hypothesis no. 1(b) "There exists no significant relationship between happiness and interpersonal adequacy dimension of social maturity among adolescents" stands rejected.

The reason behind such a finding could be as interpersonal adequacy dimension of social maturity includes three sub-domains. The first one is communication which is an ability to understand, communicate and make clear meaningful speech and gestures. This ability also involves empathy which sensitizes the individual to the affective domain and demands effective communication. The second domain in interpersonal adequacy is enlightened trust which is a general belief that it is acceptable to rely or depend on others when need arises. It involves clear functioning of enlightened decision about whom, when and how much to trust. The last domain is cooperation which is an altruistic tendency to join others in their efforts in order to reach a mutually desirable goal. It involves ability to regard rules and practices more as a reciprocal social agreement than a rigid unchangeable law (Greenberger et al. 1974 & Rao, 2006).

Higher scores on these domains imply that the adolescent is able to communicate well with others, has feelings of mutual trust within his circle and gives and seeks cooperation in a group activity. Such

abilities make the adolescent well settled in social dealings which leads to feelings of adequacy in interpersonal relations, thus increasing the scores on happiness.

The table also shows the coefficient of correlation (product moment method) between happiness and social adequacy dimension of social maturity is 0.61.

Analyzing this value in comparison with the critical table value of r , it clearly reflects that the obtained correlation is significant. Therefore, it implies that the two variables are correlated. Social adequacy dimension of social maturity of adolescents is correlated with their happiness. Further checking the levels and direction of correlation, it is seen that happiness and social adequacy dimension of social maturity have moderate positive correlation. Hereby implying that higher social adequacy is associated with higher happiness and vice versa. So the hypothesis no. 1(c) "There exists no significant relationship between happiness and social adequacy dimension of social maturity among adolescents" stands rejected.

The above results can be explained as social adequacy dimension of social maturity includes three sub-domains. First domain being social commitment which involves a feeling of oneness with others, willingness to modify or relinquish personal goals in the interest of societal goals and also a readiness to invest in long term social goals. The second domain is social tolerance which involves a person's willingness to interact with individuals and groups, who differ from him. Sensitivity to the right of individuals and groups who differ from him, thus accepting the differences as a means of building up the out group loyalties. The third domain is openness to change which involves willingness to accept changes in the social setting and adapt oneself to the demands of these, changes (Greenberger et al. 1974 & Rao, 2006).

Thus high scores on social adequacy dimension of social maturity implies the adolescent is socially committed, can deal well with people with opposite viewpoint and is willing to change according to demands of social situations, such an ability makes the adolescent feel socially adequate thus definitely raising his levels of happiness.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The conclusions drawn from the present study indicate that happiness has significant relationship with the social maturity. It is clear that happiness effects social maturity of adolescents. Happiness is also correlated with the dimensions of social maturity-personal, interpersonal and social adequacy. These results clearly imply that if happiness of adolescents has to be looked after, efforts should be made to enhance their social maturity.

Thus the agencies of education should collectively strive towards increasing the social interactions, social roles and responsibilities and give freedom to make own judgments to the adolescents which will definitely work towards making are teens happier and increase their contribution towards school, society and family.

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