

# Happiness, Self-efficacy and Learned Optimism of University Students

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**Abstract:** Self- efficacy is the belief of people in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions. Learned optimism is a sense of enthusiasm, confidence and control, which develops once one achieves small successes. Happiness is a positive emotional state. It involves the detailed evaluation of one's current position in the world. The present research was executed to elucidate the role of self –efficacy and learned optimism in happiness of university students. **Design:** The sample consisted of 50 students studying post-graduate courses in a university. They were assessed by self-efficacy scale, learned optimism scale and happiness scale. **Results:** The results of correlation coefficient indicated that all of the studied variables were positively significantly correlated with happiness. Also, the regression analysis showed that self -efficacy and learned optimism could predict happiness significantly. The implications and limitations of the research are discussed. **Conclusion:** On the basis of the findings in the present study we may conclude that self –efficacy and learned optimism are influential factors in happiness of university students.

**Keywords:** self –efficacy, learned optimism, happiness and university students.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Students are the greatest resource of a nation. They are to be given appropriate guidance and counseling so that they can lead their lives successfully. The need to be happy is an urgent requirement for students. Happiness is one of the important pursuits of life of every individual .Every person desires to be happy. Happiness is a positive emotional state that is exclusively defined by each person. Modern Western psychology generally holds a post-materialistic view of happiness that gives emphasis on pleasure, satisfaction and meaning in life.

Every person desires to lead a long life. Quality of life is the most important pre-requisite for all people. People favor happier and pleasant experiences. Hedonic view of happiness defines good life in terms of personal happiness. Hedonic psychology is associated with philosophy of hedonism. The chief goal of life according to hedonic psychology is pursuit of happiness and pleasure. Subjective well-being is an offshoot of hedonism .It is defined as life satisfaction, the presence of positive affect and relative absence of negative affect.

The eudemonic tradition of happiness follows Aristotle's writings and defines happiness as self-realization. Living with your true self is good life. It results from our personal expressiveness successfully. The present study is an attempt in making an understanding of how self-efficacy and learned optimism contribute to the happiness in university students.

### **Self- efficacy:**

Self- efficacy is the belief of people in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions. It is what people can do with their skills under certain conditions. It begins in infancy and continues throughout life. It is based on the social cognitive theory which says human beings shape their own lives rather than accepting the environmental forces.

The frontal and prefrontal lobes of human brain are centers in brain for self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is necessary for coping with various psychological problems. It influences physical health by increasing healthy behavior. It is a common factor in various psychotherapies.

#### **Learned optimism:**

Learned optimism is a sense of enthusiasm, confidence and control, which develops once one achieves small successes. How an individual thinks about events in his/her life greatly affects the kinds of actions he/she take. Learned optimism is having a strong expectation that despite the inevitable setbacks and frustrations, events and experiences will eventually turn out alright.

#### **Happiness:**

Happiness is a positive emotional state. It involves the detailed evaluation of one's current position in the world. It is the sum total of positive effect and general life satisfaction. It is flourishing of human beings and associated with living a life of virtue. The happiness level of a person is governed by three factors which are a set point for happiness, happiness relevant circumstantial factors, and happiness-producing activities and practices. There are two traditions on happiness. They are eudemonic and hedonic.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Review of related literature is an important pre-requisite for actual planning and carrying out of any research work. The present section represents a brief review of the researches done in the area related to the present investigation.

Abdollahi et al., (2019) showed that emotional intelligence emerged as a significant moderator in the link between evaluative concerns perfectionism and happiness.

Batik et al., (2017) said that this research was conducted to study the forgiveness and subjective happiness level of university students. The results show that forgiveness was found as a determinant of subjective happiness.

Cave et al., (2018) show significant correlations between student use of self-efficacy-building strategies and improvement in both their self-efficacy and motivation. The results also reaffirm that significant self-efficacy levels enhance motivation.

Flynn et al., (2015) explored the relationship between happiness, and six other life domains: Academic Success, Financial Security, Familial Support, Living Environment, Self-Image and Social Relations. The results show that these domains determined student's happiness.

Hong (2017) said that the main purpose of this research was to examine the relationships among school principals' transformational leadership, school academic optimism, teachers' academic optimism and teachers' professional commitment. The results revealed that principal's transformational leadership has a positive effect on school academic optimism and teachers' academic optimism. The academic optimism prevailing in an institution has a positive effect on teachers' academic optimism. The transformational leadership of the head of the institution and academic optimism of faculty members have a positive effect on professional commitment of the teaching staff.

Kapikiran et al., (2016) found that there is a direct relationship between optimism and psychological resilience with symptoms of depression. In addition, it was determined that self-esteem is a full mediator between psychological resilience and depressive symptoms.

Landon et al., (2006) found out that lower self-efficacy has been linked to childhood psychological problems.

Lyubomirsky et al., (2006) found out that happy people are able to achieve across various life divisions.

Mutambara et al., (2018) found that age and period after graduation were found to be negatively related to both general health and optimism amongst the unemployed graduates. Overall optimism and general health were found to be inversely related.

Su et al., (2016). examined that social self-efficacy and physical activity self-efficacy were clearly distinguishable. However, they had a strong positive correlation. Both social self-efficacy and physical activity self-efficacy predicted pro social behaviors significantly, with social self-efficacy having a stronger predictive power. Physical activity self-efficacy was a better predictor of effort than social self-efficacy.

Thompson et al., (2019) found that general self-efficacy was found to be average to high, while academic self-efficacy was within average range. Moreover, there was no significance between group differences in this diverse sample of community college students.

Yavuz et al., (2019) found the relationship between loneliness and happiness was also observed to be negative.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the role of self –efficacy, learned optimism on happiness among students in a University.
2. To study the relationship between self-efficacy learned optimism and happiness among students in a University.

### 4. HYPOTHESES

1. There is a positive and significant contribution of self-efficacy towards the happiness of students in a University.
2. There is a positive and significant contribution of learned optimism towards the happiness of students in a University.
3. There is a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy, learned optimism and happiness of students in a University.

### 5. METHODS

**Sample:** The sample consisted of 50 students studying post-graduate courses in a University. The sample was divided into 25 males and 25 females. They were of the age group 20-25. They were drawn by snowball sampling from a University.

**Tools:**

1. Self - efficacy scale : The scale was developed by Mathur and Bhatnagar(2012). This scale has a set of 22 statements drawn from everyday life experiences. There are five modes of answering : strongly agree, agree , undecided , disagree and strongly disagree. Higher is the score , higher is the level of self-efficacy.
2. Learned optimism scale: The scale was developed by Pethe, Dhar, Upinder Dhar and Chaudhuri(2000). The scale has 22 statements and there are five modes of answering : strongly agree, agree , undecided , disagree and strongly disagree. Higher is the score , higher is the level of learned optimism.
3. Happiness scale: The scale was developed by Rastogi and Moorjani (2017). The scale has 62 statements and there are five modes of answering: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. Higher is the score, higher is the level of happiness.

**Procedure:** The students were asked to complete the questionnaires of self-efficacy, learned optimism and happiness. They were also informed that their anonymity will be preserved and their responses kept confidential. After this the questionnaires were collected and scored manually.

### 6. RESULTS

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations coefficients among independents variables with dependent variable (n=50)**

Variables	M(SD)	Happiness
Self -efficacy	85.12(11.27)	.785**
Learned optimism	101.74(13.69)	.957**
Happiness	268.96(68.43)	

As shown in Table 1, the mean and S.D.. of self-efficacy, learned optimism and happiness were 85.12 (SD=11.27), 101.74(SD=13.69) and 268.96 (SD=68.43) respectively. The table shows the correlation coefficients of self-efficacy and learned optimism with happiness. All correlations were positive and statistically significant. (ps<0.01)

**Table 2: Effects of self-efficacy and learned optimism on happiness of university students**

Variables	MR	RS	FP	B	t	P
Intercept	.985 <sup>a</sup>	.970	748.208 P,.001	-261.762	-18.801	.000
Self-efficacy				2.288	9.162	.000
Learned Optimism				3.303	16.067	.000

A multiple regression was run to predict happiness from self-efficacy and learned optimism. The result showed that the prediction model was fitted and the variables statistically and significantly predicted happiness,  $F=748.208$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $R^2=.970$ . Furthermore, the unstandardized co-efficient (Bs) showed that self-efficacy and learned optimism significantly predicted happiness. Also, the general form of equation to predict happiness from self-efficacy and learned optimism is predicted happiness =  $-261.762 + (2.288 \times \text{self-efficacy}) + (3.303 \times \text{learned optimism})$

## 7. DISCUSSION

This study aimed at predicting happiness from self-efficacy and learned optimism. As expected the results of the correlation analysis showed that self-efficacy and learned optimism were positively correlated with happiness. Also, the multiple regression model predicted that both the variables self-efficacy and learned optimism significantly predicted happiness. A person high in self-efficacy will have more faith in himself/herself and will be able to do work with greater efficiency and promptness and thus have more happiness. Similarly, a person with high level of learned optimism will be able to cultivate more positive emotions and thus have more optimistic outlook to life and thus will be happier.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Consequently, it is concluded that self-efficacy and learned optimism are positively correlated with happiness. Both the independent variables are having significant variance on the happiness of University students. The people with high levels of self-efficacy and learned optimism are having higher levels of happiness.

## 9. SUGGESTION

The findings of the study reveal the influence of self-efficacy and learned optimism on happiness of university students. However additional researches are needed to study the moderating factors of happiness among different professions, culture as well as age groups. The findings of this research could be compared with those found in other area of the world to decode similarities and differences.

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### Conflict of interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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