Influence of Age, Income, Gender , Marital and Job Status on Happiness

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Abstract : *The word 'happiness' is an umbrella term for all that is good. It is often used interchangeably with terms like 'wellbeing' or 'quality of life'. In the context of holistic approach to health and wellness the subjective well being or happiness of an individual becomes an important variable to study. The Gross National Happiness index is generated to reflect the happiness and general well-being of the nation's population. The nine dimensions - Psychological Well-being, Time Use, Community Vitality, Culture, Health, Education, Environmental Diversity, Living Standard, and Governance are measured for calculating the GNH index. Among the people who make happy, younger adults felt that it is the family members followed by friends and colleagues .Younger adults experience more happiness when they are engaged in hobbies followed by college/office and home. Middle and late adults felt that they get more happiness with the office and household work followed by hobbies.*
Keywords: *Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Age, Income , Gender, Marital status, Employment status*

Introduction :Aristotle stated that happiness is the only thing that humans desire for its own sake. He observed that men sought riches not for the sake of being rich but to be happy. Happiness is often associated with the presence of favourable circumstances such as a supportive family life, a loving marriage and economic stability. Dictionary defines happiness as a state of well-being and contentment, a pleasurable satisfaction that comes when the individual's needs and wishes are fulfilled. Life satisfaction refers to a person's general happiness, freedom from tension and interest in life. Life satisfaction refers to the overall cognitive-judgmental aspects of subjective well-being (Diener, 1984). Material comforts have consistently been shown to play a minimal role in predicting satisfaction with life (Rain *et al.*, 1996; Vermunt *et al.*, 1989). Happiness was found to be unaffected by external factors such as satisfaction with housing and finances, perceived health, locus of control and activity level. However, happiness had an effect on the perception of satisfaction with health, housing and finances. Happiness is a subjective condition and it is not necessary that a satisfied person is also happy. Moreover life satisfaction focuses only on the general perception of an individual's own life.

Four qualities of life

Outer qualities	Inner qualities	
Life chances	Livability of environment	Life-ability of the person
Life results	Utility of life	Satisfaction with life

Livability of the environment

The left top quadrant denotes the meaning of good living conditions, called 'livability'.

Ecologists see livability in the natural environment and describe it in terms of pollution, global warming and degradation of nature. Livability is associated with the quality of society as a whole and also with the position one has in society. Livability is not what is called happiness here. It is rather a precondition for happiness and not all environmental conditions are equally conducive to happiness.

Life-ability of the person

An ability to deal with the problems of life will mostly contribute to happiness as defined here, but is not identical. If one is competent in living one has a good chance at happiness, but this endowment does not guarantee an enjoyable outcome.

Utility of life

The left bottom quadrant represents the notion that a good life must be good for something more than itself. This assumes some higher values. There is no current generic for these external outcomes of life. Gerson (1976: 795) refers to these effects as 'transcendental' conceptions of quality of life. Another appellation is 'meaning of life', which then denotes 'true' significance instead of mere subjective sense of meaning. I prefer the simpler 'utility of life', while admitting that this label may also give rise to misunderstanding.

A useful life is not necessary a satisfying life.

Four kinds of satisfaction

Four kinds of satisfaction

Passing		Enduring
Part of life	Instant satisfaction (pleasures)	Domain satisfaction
Life as a whole	Top experience	Life satisfaction (Happiness)

Pleasures : Passing satisfaction with a part of life is called 'pleasure'. Pleasures can be sensory, such as a glass of good wine, or mental, such as the reading of this text. The idea that we should maximize such satisfactions is called 'hedonism'.

Domain satisfaction : The top right quadrant denotes enduring appreciation of life-aspects, such as marriage satisfaction and job-satisfaction. This is currently referred to as 'domain-satisfactions'. Though domain-satisfactions depend typically on a continuous flow of instant-satisfactions, they have some continuity of their own.

Top-experience: The bottom right quadrant denotes the combination of passing experience and appraisal of life-as-a-whole. That combination occurs typically in top-experiences, which involve short-lived but quite intense

feelings and the perception of wholeness. This is the kind of happiness poet's write about.

Core meaning: lasting satisfaction with one's life-as-a-whole

Lastly, the bottom-right quadrant represents the combination of enduring satisfaction with life-as-a-whole. This is what I mean when I use the word happiness. A synonym is 'life-satisfaction'. This is the meaning the utilitarian philosophers had in mind when talking about happiness. When speaking about the 'sum' of pleasures and pains they denoted a balance over time and thus a durable matter.

Gross national Happiness (GNH): Since the mid-2000s, steps have been taken to build a GNH Index which would draw as fully as possible on the holistic and deliberate vision of development. GNH index would be used in:

1. Setting an alternative framework of development;

2. Providing indicators to sectors to guide development;

3. Allocating resources in accordance with targets and GNH screening tools;

4. Measuring people's happiness and well being;

5. Measuring progress over time;

6. Comparing progress across the country.

The nine domains of GNH are given below.
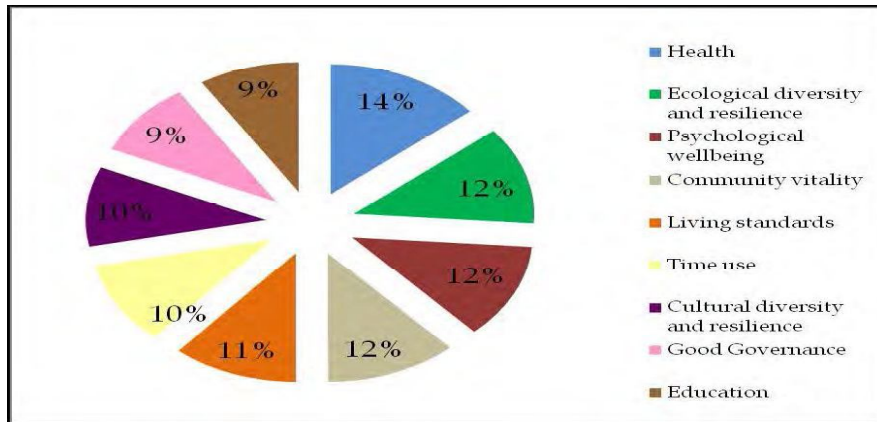
Concepts of Happiness
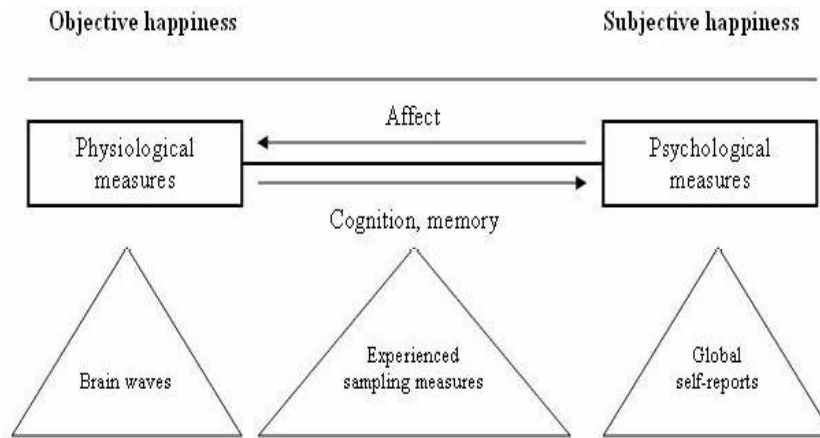
Objectives of the study

- To measuring the subjective happiness levels of young, middle and late adult people

- To exploring the areas and activities that make people happy.

Methodology : Kurnool and Hyderabad districts of then united Andhra Pradesh state were selected. The sample for the study comprised of 90 adults from three categories. Of which, young adults (15 to 21years) are 30 members, Middle adults(22 to 50 years) – 30 members, Late adults (51 -75 years) - 30 members.

Subjective happiness scale developed and standardized by By Sonja Lyubomirsky and Heidi s. Lepper (1997) was used for the study. Age, Gender, Marital status, working staus are Independent variables and happiness level is the Dependent variable. Mean frequency and percentages were used for analysis of the data.

Based on the score the levels of happiness were categorized . Score range : 4-28: these includes- Very happy – 21-28; Average happiness - 13-20 and Not very happy - 4- 12

Results and Discussion
Distribution of respondents based on Age
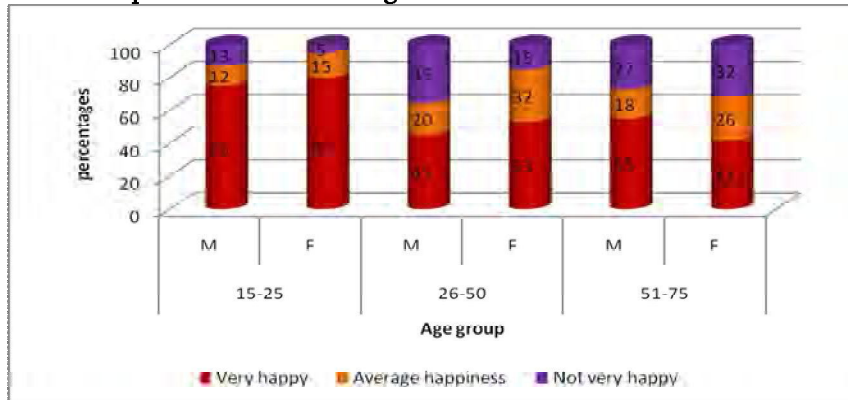
The study revealed that majority of the young adults (80%) feel very happy about their lives followed by the adults in later adulthood and middle adulthood period. Female middle and late adults were found to be experiencing average happiness more than that of males of that age group. About 35 % of middle male adults responded that they are not happy with their lives followed by later adulthood females(32%).

Distribution of respondents based on Marital status
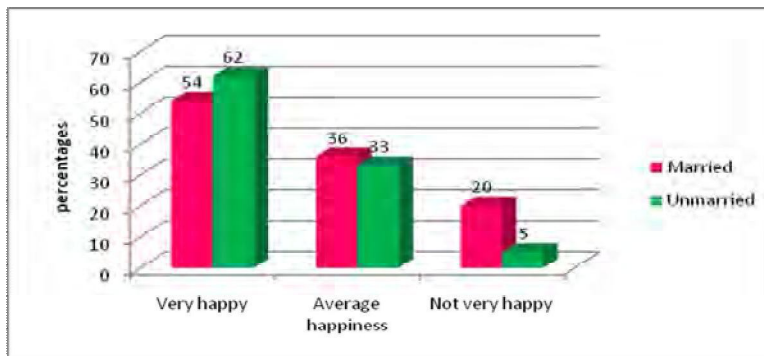

Marital status Vs Happiness

The results show that, majority (54%) of the married adults are very happy followed by average (36%) and not very happy levels(20%). Similarly majority of the unmarried adults expressed that they are very happy (62%) followed by average (33%) and not very happy(5%) categories

When we compare the married and unmarried adults on the levels of happiness, unmarried adults are more happy than the married adults.

Distribution of respondents based on Employment status
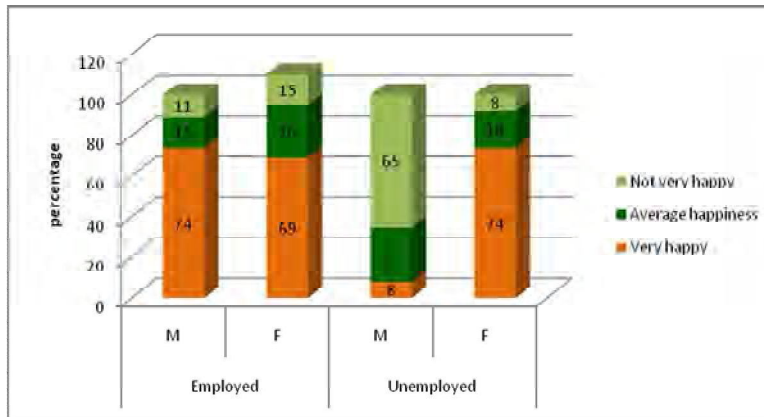
The study revealed that majority (74%) of the employed males and unemployed females are more happy followed by employed females (69%). Employed females experience more average and low levels of happiness compare to the male employed. Majority of the unemployed males (65%)experience that they are not very happy about their lives.

Distribution of respondents based on Income

Income Vs Happiness

The results reveal that higher income group people are very happy (82%) followed by middle income (79%) and low income group (65%). Similarly, average and low levels of happiness are expressed more by low income group compared to high and middle income group people. Interestingly, high income group people experience more low levels of happiness than the middle income group.

Distribution of respondents based on Gender

Gender Vs Happiness

- Very happy
- Average happiness
- Not very happy
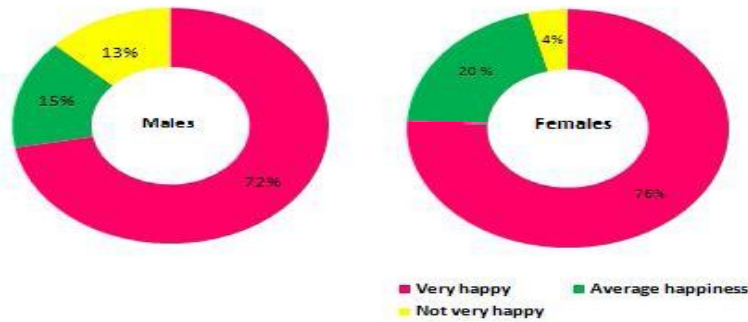
It is very interesting to note that female adults are more happier than the male adults and more number of females experience average happiness (20%) than their male counterparts (15%). Majority of the male adults (13%) told that they are not very happy compared to females (4%). In general. females are more happier than males.

Area which gives most happiness
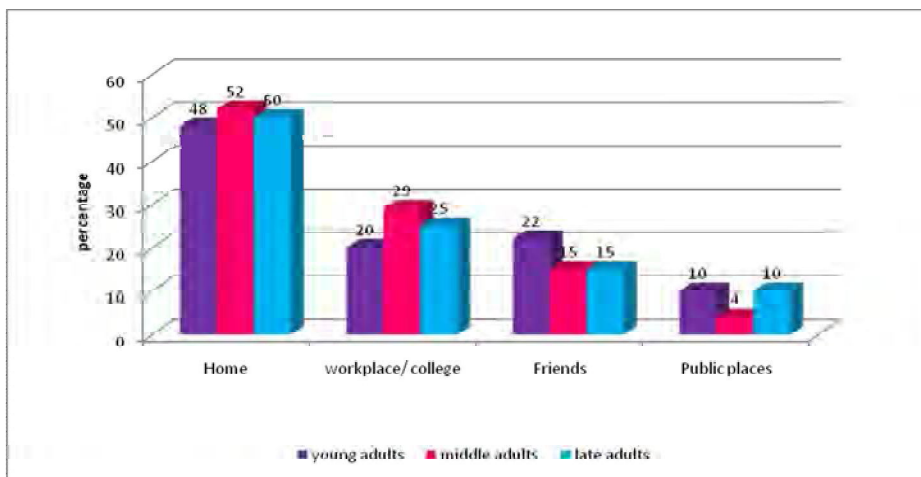
The study revealed that nearly 50 percent of the respondents expressed that home is the place where they experience more happiness followed by workplace/college, friends and public places.

Young adults feel more happy in their homes followed by friends and work place/college. Whereas middle and late adults expressed that they feel very happy in their homes followed by workplace , friends and public places.

Who makes you more happy ?
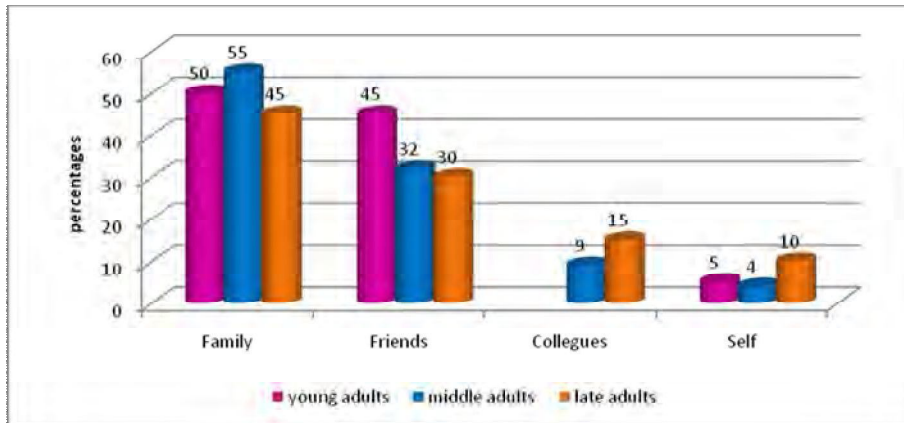
Fifty percent of the young adults expressed that they feel very happy when they spend their time with their family members followed by friends. Majority of the middle adults feel that family members make them very happy followed

by friends and colleagues. Similar trend was observed in the late adults who expressed that family makes them more happy followed by friends , colleagues and self.

Activities make you most happy
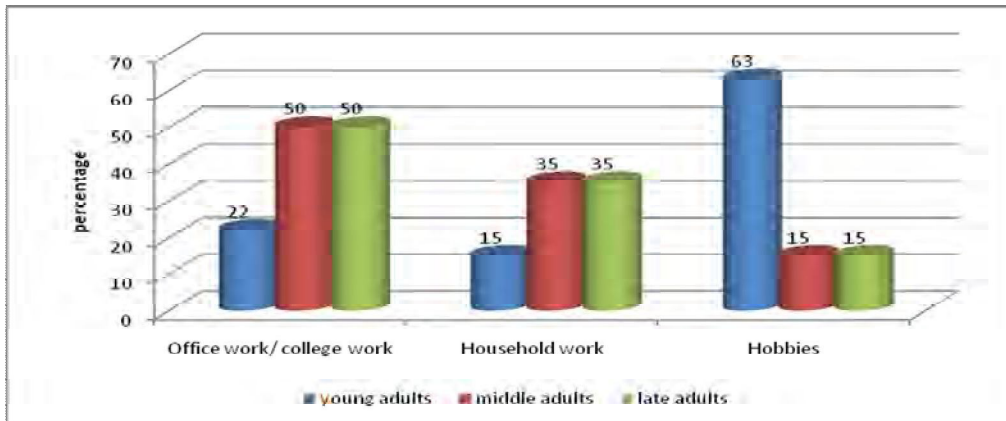
Majority of the young adults (63%) feel very happy when they are engaged in hobbies such as singing, dancing, painting, sports etc compared to office / college work (22%) and house hold work (15%). Middle and late adults expressed that they are more happy doing office work followed by house hold work and hobbies

Major findings of the study:

➢ Young adults are more happier than the middle and later adulthood people

➢ Unmarried people are more happier than the married ones

➢ Employed males and unemployed females are more happier than their counterparts i.e. employed females and unemployed males

➢ Higher the income, higher is the happiness experienced.

➢ Females are more happier than the males

➢ Younger adults felt that home is the best place to experience happiness followed by friends and work place/college

➢ Whereas middle and late adults felt that, home and work place are the areas which give happiness followed by friends

➢ Among the people who make happy, younger adults felt that it is the family members followed by friends and colleagues

➢ Younger adults experience more happiness when they are engaged in

hobbies followed by college/office and home.

➢ Middle and late adults felt that they get more happiness with the office and household work followed by hobbies.

Conclusion :

Indians both as an individual and as a nation strive for lives full of meaning , peace and positive emotion .Results from a variety of studies suggest that Indians experience a preponderance of positive status and might on average be described as" mildly happy". It is likely that poor conditions in which many Indians live take a psychological fall and the research evidence suggests that wealthier individuals and wealthier Indians specifically experience significantly more happiness and lower rates of negative emotions. The policies that help improve the material standards of life in India will likely be accompanied by some gain in aggregate happiness. It is imperative for Indian policy makers to keep in mind that material gains not lead to large sacrifices in other important areas such as social relationships , public trust or the quality of the environment.   Material fulfillment is not in itself a sufficient goal where Indian happiness is concerned. Indians also experience happiness that is constructed from within and defined by local standards for emotions and individuals, perceptions of the world. India presents an interesting case of people with a fate negotiation perspective that may help buffer them from the dire effects of poverty by helping them accept their circumferences even as it propels them to affect change by giving them hope that change within limits possible. Those seeking to intervene in the happiness of Indians whether at the

individual or national level- must understand these indigenous ways of constructing happiness.

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