

Happiness and Depression Among College Students Amidst the Online Learning

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Abstract

Schools and universities were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic to prevent the virus from spreading. The ineffective operations of universities and schools significantly impacted the educational system's shift from traditional face-to-face instruction to online study. Hence, this study investigates the relationship between happiness and depression among college students amidst the online learning modality. Based on the statistical analysis, there is a significant relationship between happiness and depression ($r=.128$) among college students during the implementation of online learning.

Keywords: Depression, Happiness, College Students, Online Learning, COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, schools and universities were shut down to prevent the virus from spreading. The ineffective operations of universities and schools had a significant influence because of the educational system's change by forcing students to study online from traditional face-to-face learning. Students' attitudes, motivation, understanding, and even worry were altered due to online learning. This is because students were deprived of social interaction, causing them to feel uneasy and frustrated with the current education system (WHO, 2020).

Furthermore, some students are found to be relaxed or at ease in their homes. Moreover, it also found that students can control their happiness while maintaining excellent relationships. They also depend on their pleasure to make everyone happy. Badri et al. (2018) investigated the students' satisfaction with their social relationships at school and home. However, the school separation, psychological components, and social interaction play an essential role in students' learning is a major concern. Yang (2020), during the pandemic, identified factors that could make it worse and protect the emotional well-being or the happiness. The factors were the fear of engaging in the disease, the possibility of harm, and relational concerns. Although studies in different countries focus on happiness in several aspects, academic studies are not enough to identify the student's happiness inclined in online learning. Happiness's initial research focused on education, religion and gender, wealth, parenting styles and children, people with disabilities, and age.

According to Tan et al. (2019), depression, loneliness, disability, and contact friend frequency appeared as

significant mediators between the two most considerable mediation effects: happiness, depression and disability, and cognitive scores.

Overall, this study investigates the significant relationship between happiness and depression among college students. Thus, determine how COVID-19 affected students' online learning challenges in day-to-day living.

Research Question

This study investigates the relationship between happiness and depression among college students amidst the online learning modality. Specifically, it answers the following question:

1. Is there a significant relationship between happiness and depression among college students?

Literature Review

Happiness

Achieving happiness is a goal in modern society associated with many positive outcomes (Moshe et al., 2020). Most research about talented students focuses more on cognitive effects, and there is little research on positive psychological characteristics. From a positive psychological standpoint, the main purpose of the research is to investigate the empirical evidence related to the happiness of talented kids to differentiate from their unknown peers.

Bergold et al. (2015) compared the happiness, life satisfaction, and intellectually gifted students' well-being with nonidentified students. Numerous

longitudinal studies searching the achievements and psychosocial adjustment of gifted children have shed light on the happiness and psychosocial adjustment in talented youth and children.

Furthermore, Dean et al. (2015) aimed to address shortcomings in educational systems relating to university students' desire for pleasure and satisfaction. They looked at happiness as a long-term path rather than a brief burst of delight and intense pleasure. Their research focused on the goal of higher education and the transformative experiences that allow students to come to grips with a way of being, allowing them to connect their potential with their agency and resulting in long-term, profound happiness.

According to Donaldson et al. (2015), despite recent research on happiness and related constructs, happiness remains a hazy term, with scientists continuing to dispute its meaning, assessment, and probable cultural variances. As a result, there is currently little agreement on how to conceive or operationalize the term, and its meaning varies widely depending on context and culture. Furthermore, concepts like happiness, life satisfaction, and well-being have frequently been employed interchangeably or imprecisely in the literature.

Meanwhile, Lee et al. (2016), explained that happiness is relatively a long-standing notion that can be traced back to ancient China. Taoism's founder, Lao Tzu, thought that happiness lies in the 'Tao,' or being desireless and content with a modest life. Happiness, according to Taoism, can be attained via calm, the beauty of nature, and peace of mind.

Moreover, Barak et al. (2015) suggest that family income was associated with happiness. Although the income of participants' parents was not directly measured in this study, it was presumed that students' weekly allowances reflected the family's income somehow.

Depression

Depression was prevalent in a significant number of people (Seo et al., 2018). Female students have a higher GPA than male pupils, which is in line with the fact that women have a higher lifetime prevalence of depression than men. In addition, we discovered that people who slept poorly had a higher chance of being depressed when it comes to sleep quality.

Xiang et al. (2020) evaluate Chinese students' anxiety and depression in college during the outbreak of the Corona Virus and investigate the relationship between

depression and anxiety symptoms in physical activities. The study expected that many college students had scarce physical activity and would suffer from sadness and anxiety. In contrast, specific types and amounts of physical activity would lower depression and anxiety symptoms.

According to Chekroud et al. (2018), doing household chores of a college student results in the lowest depression. Maybe the reason was that chores, such as cooking together, like other activities of all family members, promote resilience to lessen stress.

Further, WHO (2021) stated that depression is a widespread ailment that affects the world's population of about 3.8 percent, with 5.7 percent of persons and 5.0 percent of adults over 60 years old suffering from depression. Of the people around the world, about 280 million suffer from depression.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design to evaluate the relationship between happiness and depression among college students.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were 292 college students who were enrolled during the school year 2021-2022. As a result, this study used a convenience sampling strategy due to the pandemic.

Instruments

The researcher utilized two instruments to measure the happiness and depression among students. The Oxford Happiness Inventory that was developed by Oxford University Press (OHI) was utilized in this study. OHI includes 29 items, of which each requires the selection of one of three options. This scale aims to measure the level of happiness that the respondents feel in their current situation.

Meanwhile, to measure and assess depression, the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS) was used. This was developed by Loviband (1995), which contains 21 Items and a collection of three self-report scales for the mentioned target variables. Thus, the study utilized the depression subscale to measure the respondents' level of depression.

Procedure

Before answering the questionnaire, the researchers asked the respondents for consent respectively. Their participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Their responses will also be kept strictly confidential and will be secured by the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173). Following the completion of the questionnaires by the students, the data was organized in accordance with factual references. The collected data will be served as a reference to develop an existing interpretation and analysis of the findings in this study.

Ethical Considerations

With the researcher's situation during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ethical standards were exceptionally and strictly enforced in various online platforms to avoid any violations regarding the pandemic. Where, the survey questionnaire was done via Google form. The consent was included in the first section of the survey form to ensure that the researchers have the respondents' full permission before proceeding with the questionnaires and applying ethical considerations. The research professor also approved the methods and instruments used to gather the data. Moreover, the participants' data input confidentiality was assuredly secured and protected by the researchers and this study. With the factors in mind, the language utilized in the questionnaire was considered for both Filipino and English speakers.

Result

This section revealed the study's statistical findings using the Pearson correlation coefficient through SPSS.

Relationship between Happiness and Depression

This study investigates the relationship between happiness and depression among college students amidst the online learning modality. The statistical analysis presented in Table 1 showed that the variables are significantly correlated ($r=.128$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1

Relationship between Happiness and Depression

	CORRELATION	
	<i>Happiness</i>	<i>Depression</i>
<i>Happiness</i>	-	.128*
<i>Depression</i>	.128*	-

Conclusion

This study investigates the relationship between happiness and depression among college students amidst the online learning modality. Based on the statistical analysis, it can be gleaned that there is a relationship between happiness and depression among college students. The study reveals that the current pandemic has become one of the reasons for a student to be happy or depressed. This somewhat indicates several factors under the pandemic, such as isolation, loneliness, and helplessness amidst the challenges of the said situation. Based on the results, it is strongly recommended that the students should be monitored to keep track of things that may have been affecting their emotional being.

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