

## The Relationship Between Happiness and Stress Among Senior High School Students from Public Schools Amidst Online Learning

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### Abstract

School is a competitive environment where students are expected to fulfill a variety of activities and responsibilities. To effectively manage academic stress necessitates coping qualities. Thus, due to online class learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, perceived stress is linked to lower happiness levels as measured by state and trait measurements. Further, this study employed a descriptive correlational design to determine the relationship between the variables among 157 senior high school students. As a result, the statistical findings show a significant relationship between stress and happiness ( $r=.038$ ).

**Keywords:** Stress, Online Learning, Happiness, COVID-19 Pandemic, Senior High School Students

### Introduction

Senior high school students must go through a curriculum and subjects under their chosen track to provide early preparation for college (Almerino et al., 2020). Alongside this are some factors that can influence a student in achieving their specific goal; some of these are happiness and stress. In addition, Goodman, Doorley, and Kashdan (2018), pleasant emotions boost one's capacity to manage stress and increase the likelihood of developing resources to encourage social interaction. Thus, happiness and stress can be linked (Mahmoodi, 2019). Happy people are more likely to have personal resources associated with stress and resilience, such as personal resilience, interpersonal resources such as supportive friends, and practical resources such as a stable financial condition (Vallerand, 2018).

Further, students frequently encounter stress due to poor time management for extracurricular activities and an imbalance in academic and social life (Yasmin, Khalil, & Mazhar, 2020). Accordingly, as Pascoe, Hetrick, and Parker (2020) stated, secondary high school and tertiary students frequently experience academic-related stress, such as pressure to achieve high grades and concerns about receiving poor grades. Consequently, these researchers also stated that everyone experiences stress when students cannot reach their desired outcome. According to Kalantan (2019), fear of failure, more demanding academics, more responsibilities, social pressures, uncertainty about the future, and concerns about college are common stress factors for students.

However, Yang, Tian, Huebner, and Zhu (2019) stated

that school experiences make students happy throughout their educational careers. Furthermore, these researchers also pronounced that engagement in the classroom and school activities, participation in the lesson, appreciation, rewards, success, and social interactions could alleviate students' loneliness. Thus, providing happiness. Nevertheless, according to Agustina (2018), the most significant high school pupils' satisfaction is participation in pleasant activities. At the same time, this researcher also noted that the least active tasks that produce happy emotions are the source of happiness, like optimism and self-assurance.

Stress and happiness significantly impact an individual's mental health. Deb (2020) discussed that happiness is a sense of purpose and well-being shared by most individuals. However, happiness can assist students' in reducing stress. Specifically, stress raises cortisol levels, leading to weight gain, sleep disturbances, and high blood pressure.

Moreover, Mahmoodi et al. (2019) revealed a significant correlation between academic stress and happiness among college students. Further, it is recommended that universities educate their students on living a healthy and happy lifestyle and promote their mental health levels. On the other hand, Moras and Carmona (2020) demonstrated the positive effect of happiness on self-efficacy and the negative effect of stress on happiness and self-efficacy. Moreover, the researcher found that stress impacts gender, age, marital status, type of graduate course, and academic area.

Finally, this study investigates the relationship between stress and happiness among senior high

school students in public schools.

### Research Question

This study investigates the relationship between stress and happiness among senior high school students in public schools. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following question:

1. Is there a significant relationship between stress and happiness in senior high school students?

### Literature Review

#### Stress

Secondary and postsecondary school students endure persistent pressures associated with academic responsibilities (Pascoe, Hetrik, & Parker, 2020). Furthermore, the study mentioned above has shown that academic-related stress can lower academic achievement, diminish motivation, and raise the likelihood of dropping out of school.

In the same breath, Maajida, Vishnu, and Gayathri (2018) pronounced that stress occurs when combining internal and external demands surpasses an individual's ability to cope with their condition. In addition, for numerous young adults, college and school are the best years. However, depression, worry, and stress may all wreak havoc on these crucial years. Thus, these researchers also stated that students who do not manage effectively with stress have a negative impact on their studies and behavior.

#### Happiness

Badri et al. (2018) stated that the reasons for happiness are multifactorial. To elaborate, the findings show that both home and school positively influence student happiness in public and private schools. With that being said, the results support both direct and indirect relationships between the influence of home on happiness.

Employing the study of Abdollahi et al. (2019), emotional intelligence is significantly and positively connected with happiness. Theoretically, emotional intelligence may improve adaptive intrapersonal and interpersonal functioning, leading to better satisfaction of individuals.

#### Happiness and Stress

Salavera et al. (2017) remarked that coping strategies addressed people's spiritual support and social action in terms of happiness. Moreover, it plays a role in identifying teenagers who had more excellent perceptions of subjective happiness. However, components of an ineffective coping style, such as worrying, failing to cope, reducing stress, blaming oneself, and holding it against oneself, revealed that utilizing fewer techniques resulted in greater subjective enjoyment.

Mahmoodi et al. (2019) noted that when compared to their peers, male students had higher levels of happiness, as did students with higher levels of academic self-efficacy and lower levels of academic stress. Therefore, happiness and academic stress correlate with each other.

Kim (2017) exhibits that stress and happiness were significantly correlated, alongside optimism. Further, stress directly affected college students' happiness. With that being said, it is needed to develop and implement a program for happiness enhancement in schools to decrease students' stress.

### Methodology

#### Research Design

The study used a descriptive-correlational approach to evaluate the existing relationship between stress and happiness among senior high school students from a public school.

#### Participants

The respondents of this study comprise 157 senior high school students who are currently enrolled in any public school in the Philippines. Thus, the study employed the convenience sampling method due to the excessive number of COVID-19 cases.

#### Instruments

Two standardized tools became the instrument for assessing the stress of senior high school students. Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1994) and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002) served as a guide for the study.

Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha for the PSS-14 was 0.830 and 0.754 for the PSS-10. Therefore, this proved the validity of the questionnaires employed (Huang et

al., 2020). On the other side, Hadinezhad and Zaree (2009) discovered that Cronbach's alpha for the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was 0.84 and 0.87. Thus, the instruments used are validated and reliable.

### Procedures

Participants were given permission and sufficient time to complete the survey accurately. Additionally, their participation in this study was entirely voluntary. The responses from the participants will be kept strictly confidential and safeguarded by the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 101723). Thus, these variables formed the goal of understanding the relationship between stress and happiness through a methodical leap of methods of information gathering. The collected data served as the foundation for developing accurate interpretation and analysis to present the findings.

### Ethical Considerations

The study considered the risk of exposure during face-to-face meetings with participants because of the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it is tough to quantify this risk, it can be mitigated by employing a Google form to answer the study questions. Further, the consent form was included in the first section of the survey to guarantee that the researchers had the respondents' full approval before moving on to the study's criteria. Moreover, the researchers and this study secured and protected the respondents' data. Thus, the study ensured that every respondent would understand the questionnaire.

### Result

#### Relationship between Happiness and Stress

The statistical analysis in Table 1 reveals that happiness and stress have a significant relationship ( $r=.038$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1

*Pearson Correlation of Happiness and Stress*

CORRELATION		
	<i>Happiness</i>	<i>Stress</i>
<i>Happiness</i>	-	.038*
<i>Stress</i>	.038*	-

In relation to this finding, Kim (2017) reveals that stress, happiness, and optimism were significantly correlated, and stress directly affected college students' happiness. Additionally, this study implies that optimism increases the students' happiness, and it is needed to develop and implement a program for happiness enhancement as one the program in schools to decrease students' stress.

### Discussion

This study investigates the relationship between stress and happiness among senior high school students in public schools. As a result, the findings demonstrate that perceived stress is connected to lower happiness levels as evaluated by state and trait assessments. Therefore, programs should boost happiness that might benefit students from stress management and coping strategies.

In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, student satisfaction has statistically significant differences. More than two-thirds of students were dissatisfied with online learning, which causes stress among them. However, worrying, failing to cope, minimizing stress, blaming oneself, and holding it against oneself were components of an inefficient coping style. Thus, if there is a limitation on schoolwork, students can attain more subjective enjoyment and happiness.

### Conclusion

The existence of the pandemic makes it challenging for the students to learn. It indicates that being stressed while accomplishing school activities during online learning under the COVID-19 pandemic can influence the students' positive emotions. Therefore, the researchers propose that schools provide academic assistance and academic breaks to students to reduce stress with their schoolwork. Furthermore, the stress of students should be addressed. According to the findings of this study, providing students less work will permit them to feel less stressed and increase their happiness. Finally, incorporating a good relationship in online learning will allow students to experience less stress and happiness.

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