

REVIEW ARTICLE

HAPPINESS LEVEL OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Happiness is a state of well-being. It is the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his own life as a whole favourably. In the present paper the construct of happiness includes the five elements of Seligman's Well-being model viz. positive emotions, engagement, meaning, positive relationship and accomplishment. The present paper is an attempt to focus on the happiness level of the Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as well as comparison of the happiness level among the different categories of the Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district. Though happiness plays a very significant role on work performance and organizational success yet this has been getting very less importance in the scientific psychological studies. So, present paper is an effort to bridge such gaps in Indian context. It is evident from this study that territory, type of management of the schools, and nature of appointment of the teachers has significant role on the level of happiness of the Secondary school teachers.

Key Words: Happiness, Secondary school.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of conducting research on Happiness is relatively new. The findings about Happiness have yet to receive wide attention among psychologists themselves, much less, the general public. But now slowly psychologists' insight into Happiness and well-being are increasing. Happiness is a state of well-being. It is the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his own life as a whole favorably, and it is generally considered to be an ultimate goal in life. Aristotle concluded that, more than anything else, men and women seek happiness. Every other goal—health, beauty, money or power—is valued only with the expectation that these will make us happy (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

What is happiness: The term happiness seems very vague, unmanageable and non technical for scientific use. Seligman (2012) proposed that the term could be decomposed into five scientifically manageable realms. These are *positive emotion* (pleasant life), *engagement* (engaged life), *meaning* (meaningful life), *positive relationship* and *accomplishment*. These terms are measurable, manageable, and can be handled precisely. Most importantly the components are skill based and can be taught and learnt.

Positive emotions (Pleasant life): The pleasant life is what the hedonic theories of happiness refer. It consists in having a lot of positive emotion about the present, past and future and learning the skills to amplify the intensity and duration of these emotions (Seligman *et al.*, 2006). Satisfaction, contentment, pride, serenity and fulfillment are some of the emotions about the past.

Positive emotions about the present include satisfaction derived from immediate pleasure and positive emotions about the future include hope, optimism, faith, trust and confidence. When people refer in casual conversation to being happy, they are often referring to this route. Within limits, we can increase positive emotions. The "broaden and build" theory of Fredrickson suggests that in contrast to negative emotions positive emotions lead us to more expansive and creative thoughts and behavior which create additional personal resources over time (Fredrickson and Brangian, 2005). They enable individuals to create additional resources in four main categories—intellectual (developing our problem solving skill), physical (developing our physical strength and cardiovascular health), social (facilitating the quality and quantity of our friendship and other relationships and connections) and psychological (developing our resilience and optimism) (Friedrickson and Branigan, 2005). They improve resilience in crisis (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh and Larkin, 2003). People having positive emotions like optimism are much less likely to die in heart attacks than pessimists (Giltay *et al.*, 2004).

Engagement (engaged life): The second component of happy life in Seligman's theory is engagement (engaged life) a life that pursue involvement and absorption in work, intimate relations and leisure (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi uses the term *flow* to refer highly engaging and absorbing works. During flow people experience deep enjoyment, creativity and total involvement with life. It is a state of complete absorption in a creative or playful activity. Time passes quickly. Attention is completely focused on the activity. The sense of self is lost (Moneta and Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). We feel a sense of exhilaration, a deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). "It is what the sailor holding a tight course feels when the wind whips through his hair, when the boat lunges through the waves like a colt—sails, hull, wind and

sea humming a harmony that vibrates in the sailor's veins. It is what a painter feels when the colours on the canvas begin to set up a magnetic tension with each other, and a new thing, a living form, takes shape in front of the astonished creator. Or it is the feeling a father has when his child for the first time responds to his smile" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In the flow state people become so involved in what they are doing the activity becomes spontaneous, almost automatic; they stop being aware of themselves from the actions they are performing. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The purpose of the flow is to keep on flowing, not looking for a peak or utopia but staying in the flow. It is not a moving up but a continuous flowing. There is no possible reason for climbing except climbing itself; it is a self-communication. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). If one is asked who are in flow what is he thinking and feeling he usually says 'nothing'. In flow we merge with the object. There is mingling of subject and object.

Meaning (meaningful life): The third component of Seligman's model is meaning. "I go into flow playing bridge, but after a long tournament, when I look in the mirror, I worry that I am merely fidgeting until I die. The pursuit of engagement and the pursuit of pleasure are often solitary, solipsistic endeavors. Human beings, definitely, want meaning and purpose in life" (Seligman, 2012). And life gets meaning when it is extended from the self. According to Seligman (2012) "the meaningful life consists in belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than the self". Meaning is increased through our connections to others, future generations, or cause that transcend the self (Durkheim, 1951). Meaning increases when one uses his character strength for the betterment of others. These activities produce a subjective sense of meaning and are strongly correlated with happiness (Lyubomirsky, King and Diener, 2005). Thus meaning performs two central functions in our lives. Firstly it makes us more resilient to bounce back from adversity. Lack of meaning is not just a symptom, but a major cause of depression. Meaning works as a means to relieve depression. Secondly, it gives a sense of direction, enabling us to set goals and targets to aim for.

Accomplishment: Accomplishment is the fourth element of the well-being model of Seligman that the authentic happiness model did not consider. In his well being model his assertion is that people pursue success, accomplishment, achievement, mastery and success for their own sake. Though people work, play for the pursuit of fun, engagement and joy but at the same time they possess the pursuit of victory. Nurturing Accomplishment on its own or together with any of the other four facets, says Seligman, will lead to higher well being (Seligman, 2012).

Positive relationship: Positive relationship is the fifth element of the well-being theory of Seligman. This element recognizes the importance of connectedness and thriving relationship in well-being. There is no denying that the desire for connection is a fundamental human need. One's relationships with family, friends, loved ones, colleagues and others are a central detriment of well-being. Being an element of well-being theory positive relationship fulfills at least two criteria of well-being theory. They contribute to well-being and they can be measured independently of the other elements (Seligman, 2012).

By considering the elements of the Well-Being model of Seligman following dimensions were considered in the present study to describe happiness.

- (a) **Life evaluation:** Personal assessment of one's present life.
- (b) **Basic Access:** Measures basic needs optimal for a healthy life, such as access to food and medicine, having health insurance and feeling safe while walking at night. (Gallup, 2009)
- (c) **Physical health:** Measures chronic diseases, sick days, physical pain, daily energy and other aspects of physical health.
- (d) **Emotional health:** Measures a composite of respondent's daily experiences, including laughter, worry, anger and stress.
- (e) **Work environment:** Measures job satisfaction, ability to use one's strength at their workplace and whether one's supervisor treats him or her more like a boss or a partner. This dimension also measures the level satisfaction related to accomplishment.
- (f) **Healthy behaviour:** Measures healthy behavior in groups and connectedness.

Why does happiness matter: Happiness has a very positive impact in all the spheres of life. Happiness is closely associated with creativity, productivity and longevity of an individual. In teaching learning phenomena also happy people are more productive and creative.

Negative emotions are disabling in working environment. In contrast positive emotions like joy, pleasure, contentment tell us that something good is happening. They broaden our attention. This broadened attention prepares us to be open to new ideas and practices and to be more creative than usual (Isen, 2000). Thus positive emotions develop relationship and increase productivity. Happy people overestimate their skills and remember more positive than negative events and are better at making life planning decisions (Aspinwall, Richter and Hoffman, 2001). Fredrickson (2009) showed that positivity opens up. The first core truth about positive emotions is that they open our hearts and our minds, making us more receptive and more creative. Secondly, they transform us for better. Evidences of longitudinal studies show that happiness is significantly related to longevity.

For the last half century Psychology was totally imbalanced by emphasizing mostly on negatives of life. Psychology has been consumed with a single topic, i.e. mental illness (Seligman, 2002). It is observed that giving attention and weight on negatives of human behavior compared to the positives of life has been a universal tendency. Baumgardner (2009) opined that the surest way to become famous in psychology was to publish a study showing that human nature is even worse than we had imagined. We have a general tendency to accept that bad is stronger than good. In case of Psychologists this was many times more. Psychologists know far less about mental health than mental illness. It has been evident that mental health is not just the absence of mental illness. Relieving illness does not ensure a healthy, thriving and competent individual. So the dominance of disease model on psychology should be recounted.

Now we have satisfactory understanding of almost all the psychological problems. We can measure depression, schizophrenia, alcoholism etc. with considerable precision. We can deal with these with satisfactory precision, we know about their genetics, biochemistry and psychological causes. Best of all now we have the measures to relieve these disorders. In the history of Psychotherapy we have found that good number of mental illnesses are treated effectively (Seligman, 2002). But as Seligman's saying, this progress has come at high cost. Priority is given more on the relieving the states that make life measurable rather than the states that make life worth living. Before Seligman psychology was merely a repairing shop of the broken lives. But now it has been realized that strengthening positives is worthier than the repairing negatives. People want more than just to correct their weaknesses. They do not just want to reduce evils from the lives but also try to increase the worth. They don't just try to go from minus ten to minus five but from plus five to plus ten.

Significance of the present study: It is evident from the research that the happy people are more able to give to others (Seligman, 2002; Post, 2005). It follows then that happy teachers will be more able to give to students and teach them well. Teaching can be a physically and emotionally rigorous profession with many demands and stresses. On these grounds there is a strong urgency of working for the happiness of the teachers. It has been increasingly realized that the quality of the work of the workers, the climate of an organization highly depends on the happy mood of the workers. Mental and emotional well-being of citizens improves their performance and broadens the intellectual, physical and social resources of a nation. Research has found that happy people have better health habit, lower blood pressure, stronger immune system and higher endurance levels. Citizens with better emotional and mental health are easier to relate with work, tend to better decision makers, are more creative and outperform peers in problem solving, innovation, persistence and productivity.

Further, only a few research works on happiness has been done in India, whereas, most of the western countries have been concentrating on happiness as a determinant of economic growth and organizational success. Therefore it is realized as relevant and urgent to conduct a research on the level of happiness of the Secondary school teachers.

Objectives: The objectives of the present study are

- To find out the happiness level of the Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district.
- To compare the happiness level of the Rural and Urban Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh District.
- To compare the happiness level of the Female and Male Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh District.
- To compare the happiness level among Government, Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district.
- To compare the happiness level between Government and Non-Provincialised Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district.
- To compare the happiness level between Government and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district.

- To compare the happiness level between Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district.
- To compare the happiness level of the Regular and Contractual Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh District.

Hypotheses: The hypotheses of the present study are

- There is no significant difference between Rural and Urban Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.
- There is no significant difference between Female and Male Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.
- There is no significant difference among Government, Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.
- There is no significant difference between Government and Non-Provincialised Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness level are concerned.
- There is no significant difference between Government and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness level are concerned.
- There is no significant difference between Non-provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness is concerned.
- There is no significant difference between Permanent and Contractual teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness level are concerned.

Definition of the key terms

Happiness: Happiness is the degree to which an individual judges the quality of his life, emotional health, work environment, physical health, behaviour and basic access favourably. Increasing well-being and happiness refer increasing positive emotions, engagement, meaning, positive relationship and accomplishment (Seligman, 2012). Scores will be calculated on the basis of these dimensions. Higher the score in the scale means higher the happiness level.

Secondary school: Secondary schools in the present study include those Government, Non-Provincialised and Private schools having the classes of IX and X and offer the curriculum prepared by Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA).

Government school: Schools established by public and subsequently undertaken by Government of Assam are Government school. In the present study the term Government school also includes the provincialised school. For these schools Government of Assam appoints the teachers and bears salary for them. Government of Assam provides infrastructure and other facilities for these schools.

Non-Provincialised school: Schools established by public and recognized by the Government of Assam are Non-Provincialised school. For these schools Government of Assam yet to undertake the financial responsibility regarding the salary and other benefits of the teachers.

Private school: Schools which are established and managed by some private organizations or bodies are Private school.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methods Used: Normative Survey method was used in the present study.

Population: The population of the study comprised of all the teachers (Permanent and contractual) of all the Secondary schools (Government, Non-Provincialised and Private) under Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA) of Dibrugarh district, Assam of India. There are total 349 such Secondary schools in Dibrugarh district.

Sample: The researcher selected 36 schools as sample school by using stratified random sampling technique. All the teachers present during the visit of 36 sample schools were included in the sample.

Tool

Happiness scale: A Happiness scale was constructed and standardized by the researcher and used in the present study. The happiness scale consists of 40 likert type items, out of which 18 items were favourable and 22 items were unfavourable. The dimensions considered for the scale were life evaluation, emotional health, work environment, physical health and healthy behavior. The dimensions covered the dimensions of well-being model of Seligman (2012). The coefficient of reliability of the scale was 0.77. The experts opinion showed that the scale possessed satisfactory construct validity.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Happiness level of the secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district.

Table 1 shows that mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the distribution are 149.50, 150, 18.08, 0.14 and -0.60 respectively. Thus the distribution is positively skewed means more individuals of the group scored less than the average score. The value of kurtosis is 0.60 thus the distribution is platykurtic i.e. the curve is flatter than the normal curve.

Table 1. Happiness of the Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh District

No of teachers	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
281	149.50	18.08	0.14	-0.60

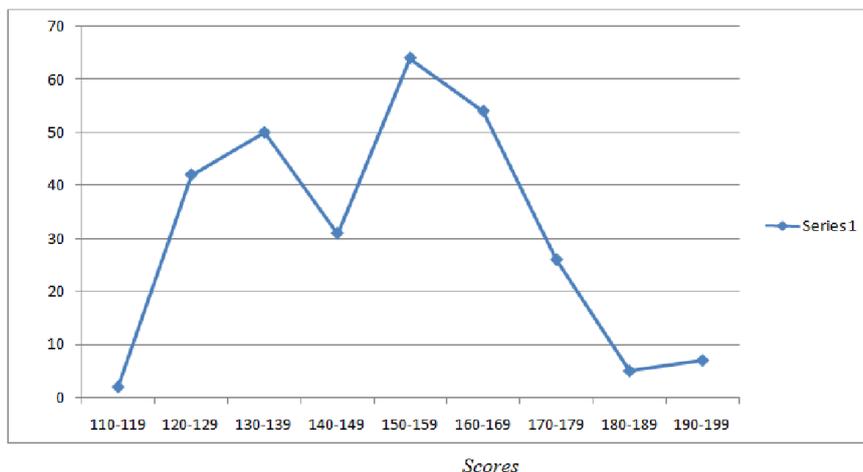


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of the happiness scores of the Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district

Now, Figure 1 shows the frequency curve indicating happiness scores obtained by the teachers of the Secondary schools of the Dibrugarh district. Figure 1 shows the frequency curve indicating the scores of the Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district in Happiness scale. From the figure it is clear that majority of the teachers (64) secured the scores ranges from 150-159. Only two (2) teachers secured scores in between 110-119 and 7 (seven) teachers secured scores in between 190-199 in Happiness scale.

Comparison of Happiness of the Rural and Urban Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district:

Hypothesis: “There is no significant difference between Rural and Urban Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.”

Table 2. Comparison of Happiness between Rural and Urban Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh District

Category	N	Mean	SD	CR	df	Inference
Rural	152	154.41	16.19	5.11	279	Significant at 0.01 level
Urban	129	143.71	18.53			

Table 2 shows that the C.R. value is 5.11 which is more than table value (2.58 at 0.01 level) and therefore significant at 0.01 level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference in happiness between Rural and Urban Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district.

Comparison of Happiness of the Female and Male Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district

Hypothesis: “There is no significant difference between Female and Male Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.”

Table 3. Comparison of Happiness between Female and Male Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh District

Category	N	Mean	SD	CR	df	Inference
Female	134	149.88	18.44	0.33	279	Not significant at 0.05 level
Male	147	149.16	17.80			

Regarding the happiness of Female and Male Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district the Table 3 shows that the C.R. value is 0.33 which is less than table value (1.96 at 0.05 level)

and therefore not significant at 0.05 level. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that there is no significant difference between Female and Male Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness is concerned.

Comparison of Happiness of the Government, Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district

Hypothesis: “There is no significant difference among Government, Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.”

Table 4. Comparison of Happiness among Government, Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh District

Category	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	Inference
Between Groups	14,685.24	2	7,342.50	39.47	Significant at 0.01 level
Within Groups	51,711.01	278	186.01		
Total	66,396.25	280			

Regarding the significance of difference among Government, Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district Table 4 shows that the F value is 39.47 which is more than table value (6.72 at 0.01 level) at 0.01 level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference among the Government, Non Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness is concerned.

Comparison of Happiness of the Government and Non Provincialised Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district

Hypothesis: “There is no significant difference between Government and Non-Provincialised Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness level are concerned.”

Table 5. Comparison of Happiness of the Government and Non Provincialised Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district

Category	N	Mean	SD	CR	df	Inference
Government	98	158.82	14.65	4.32	181	Significant at 0.01 level
Non Prov.	85	147.72	19.38			

Table 5 shows that the C.R. value is 4.32 which is more than table (2.58 at 0.01 level) value and therefore significant at 0.01 level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference between Government and Non-Provincialised Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness is concerned.

Comparison of Happiness of the Government and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district

Hypothesis: “There is no significant difference between Government and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness level are concerned.”

Table 6. Comparison of Happiness between Government and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh District

Category	N	Mean	SD	CR	df	Inference
Government	98	158.82	14.65	7.84	194	Significant at 0.01 level
Private	98	141.73	15.87			

Table 6 shows that the C.R. value is 7.84 which is more than table value (2.58 at 0.01 level) and therefore significant at 0.01 level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference between Government and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness is concerned.

Comparison of Happiness of the Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district

Hypothesis: “There is no significant difference between Non-provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness is concerned.”

Table 7. Comparison of Happiness between Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh District

Category	N	Mean	SD	CR	df	Inference
Non-Provincialised	85	147.72	19.38	2.26	181	Significant at 0.05 level
Private	98	141.73	15.87			

Table 7 shows that the C.R. value is 2.26 which is more than table value (1.96 at 0.05 level) at 0.05 level but less than table value at 0.01 level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level of significance and it is concluded that there is significant difference between Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness is concerned.

Comparison of Happiness of the Regular and Contractual Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district

Hypothesis: “There is no significant difference between Permanent and Contractual teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness level are concerned.”

Table 8. Comparison of happiness between Regular and Contractual Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh District

Category	N	Mean	SD	CR	df	Inference
Regular	182	152.97	18.12	4.66	279	Significant at 0.01 level
Contractual	99	143.13	16.25			

Table 8 shows that the C.R. value is 4.66 which is more than table value (2.58 at 0.01 level) significant at 0.01 level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference between Regular and Contractual Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness is concerned.

Major findings of the study

- There is significant difference in happiness between Rural and Urban Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district.
- There is no significant difference between Female and Male Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.
- There is significant difference among the Government, Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.
- There is significant difference between Government and Non-Provincialised Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.
- There is significant difference between Government and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.
- There is significant difference between Non-Provincialised and Private Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness is concerned.
- There is significant difference between Regular and Contractual Secondary school teachers of Dibrugarh district as far as their happiness are concerned.

Conclusion

The study showed that territory of the schools, type of management of the schools, and nature of appointment of the teachers has significant role on the level of happiness of the Secondary school teachers. However gender did not play any significant role in the level of happiness of the Secondary school teachers. Thus, it can be inferred that by ensuring good management, regularization of posts happiness of the teachers can be increased.

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