

# HAPPINESS: THE YOUNG FILIPINA PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract**—This study sought to determine what makes young Filipina happy. This study was conducted in a University in Northern Philippines whereby descriptive survey design was utilized with 691 female teenagers as respondents. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator a standardized personality test coupled with structured questionnaire were the main data gathering instruments. Document analysis was also used in obtaining profile data. Findings revealed that majority of the young Filipinas are extraverts, and majority of their mothers are housekeepers. Feeling of belongingness, contentment and appreciation, and family-related activities and concerns such as bonding with family, love of and for family make Filipina happiest. Among the three sources (people, things, activities) of happiness, the ultimate source of happiness of a young Filipina is “people” whereby their mother, father, siblings, friends and boyfriend/girlfriend are the top five happiness-provider. The findings indicate that young Filipinas are generally “pretty happy” people. Chi-square analysis revealed that the female teenagers’ happiness greatly depends on the course they are enrolled in, the religion they are affiliated with and the occupation of their mother.

**Index Terms**— Happiness, Filipina, Young Filipina, Filipino Women, Well-being, Adolescent

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Everyone wants to be happy. No one is exempt in desiring happiness regardless of one’s economic status, sex, gender, job position or even age. Happiness has various definitions. In the perspective of positive psychology, a happy person is someone who experiences frequent positive emotions, such as joy and pride and infrequent negative emotions, such as sadness, anxiety and anger [1], Bradt [2] believed that it is a choice. Various studies and articles have conflicting views on what makes a person happy.

Money is a source of happiness but only for short term [3]. More money will make a person happier but its effect mellows. Money increases happiness when it takes people away from a place where there are real threats to a place that is safe and once they are stable, money does not matter that much anymore. He also added that buying experience or spending money for vacation gives more happiness than spending on things. Other source of happiness is “acts of giving/giving to charity” because act of giving is pleasurable. When one does an act of cooperation and provision of support to others, the giver gains pleasure. The finding also reveal that people who focus on the pursuit of happiness tend to focus on personal gains, and this can damage connections with other people.

In the study on “What makes teens happy,” teens has a feeling of superficial happiness based on fun, excitement, or pleasure. He further stated that the following are sources of great happiness to the teens: friendships, music, boy or girlfriend, and dating. Their favorite leisure activities are, listening to music, watching television, and daydreaming about the future [4].

The adolescent stage where the teen agers fall is regarded as a “storm and stress” period for it is a critical stage of

human development that is marked by conflict and moodiness [5]. However, in the study of Wallace (2012) where he collected more than 2,700 middle and high school students, his findings reveal that most young people feel good about their progress on the key developmental tasks of establishing identity, achieving independence and building meaningful relationships with peers. Moreover, majority of them say that they are happy and they perceive themselves as friendly. In addition to this, his finding shows that adolescents are less self-absorbed, they are other-oriented than they are given credit for.

A longitudinal study looked at the happiness of males who studied in a prestigious school, Harvard [6]. Some studies focused on race [7] while this study looked into the nature of happiness of young Filipinos who studies in a State University in Northern Philippines. No study was conducted yet for females in Northeastern Philippines since most of the studies were conducted in the National Capital Region,

The researcher had been intellectually curious on what makes a person happy particularly the females that greatly affects one’s behavior for its achievement.

Independent Variables

Dependent Variables

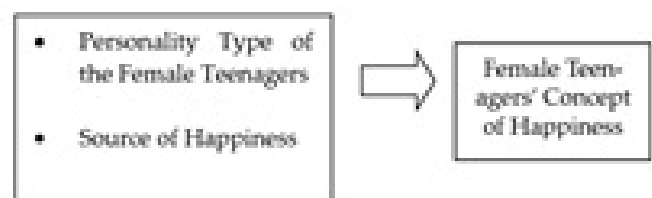


Figure 1. The relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

## 2 OBJECTIVES

The study was conducted in order to determine what makes young Filipina happy. Specifically, it tried to answer the following questions: (1) What is the profile of the female teenager in terms of course, year, age, religion, birth order, number of siblings, parents' highest educational attainment, and parents' occupation? (2) What is the personality type of the female teenager? (3) What is the concept of the female teenager to happiness (4) What is the source of happiness of the female teenager? (5) Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the female teenagers and their concept of happiness? (6) Is there a significant relationship between the personality type of the female teenager and their concept of happiness?

## 3 METHODOLOGY

The descriptive method of research was used in this study with 691 female teenager as respondents whereby total enumeration was targeted. Inclusion criteria: 15-19 years old, officially enrolled during the First Semester of School Year 2017-2018, still single, not in a live in set up. Exclusion criteria: enrolled but dropped during the 1<sup>st</sup> Semester School Year 2017-2018, and living together with boyfriend in one roof. The study was conducted in a state university in Northern Philippines.

There were two main instruments used in gathering data. A survey questionnaire and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The survey questionnaire was composed of two parts: Part I focused on the demographic profile of the students including the highest educational attainment and occupation of their parents while Part II focused on the students' concept of happiness. The MBTI which is a standardized test is self-report forced choice questionnaire that attempts to classify persons according to an adaptation of Carl Gustav Jung's theory of personality types. The instrument is a 117-item questionnaire. In this particular study, the test was used in determining whether the female teenager is an introvert or an extrovert. Permission was sought through the office of the Campus Executive Officer addressed to the College Deans, to conduct the gathering of data. No multiple responses were recorded. To further validate responses, casual interview was conducted. Document analysis was also done to validate profile data of the respondents through the office of the registrar. Questionnaires retrieved and test results were tallied and tabulated for statistical treatment. Frequency count, weighted mean, rank and chisquare analysis were used in analyzing the data.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered in order to attain the objectives which the study sought to answer. The discussions were arranged according to how it was arranged in the statement of the problem and objectives. The results of the analysis and data are illustrated through tables.

As reflected in table 1, majority (80.90 percent) of the young Filipinas are extraverts. Extraverts focus their attention and energy in the world outside themselves. They are outgoing; they seek out other people and they enjoy interacting with them. They are interested in variety; they may become impatient with long, slow tasks and do not mind being interrupted by people. People who are extraverts have the tendency to be open, action oriented, well understood by others, interact well with others, and understand the external. Their possible weaknesses however are, they do not work without people, impulsive, impatient with routine, have less independence, and they need variety and change [8]. This finding corroborates with Wallace' (2012) findings, that adolescents are less self-absorbed and they are other-oriented.

Feelings of contentment, fulfillment, freedom, appreciation, love, respect, excitement, belongingness and peace covers more than fifty percent (354 or 51. 23 percent) of the students' concept of happiness while 41.82 per cent responded that happiness means family, bonding with family, love of and for family. Filipinos prosper on interpersonal contact with the family as a driving force to a happy and stress-free lives [9]. Similarly, the young adolescent Dutch are happy youngsters and are described as having a supportive environment at home, with their friends and even at school [10]. In the study on the secret of happiness, the finding revealed that "happiness is love or good relationships keep us happier and healthier" [11]. Only 5 or 0.72 per cent of the female teenagers consider serving God and having faith in God as provider of happiness. The low percentage of spirituality could be justified in Havinghurst's developmental tasks of an adolescent, where there was no mention of spiritual development. Developmental tasks include "establishing emotional independence from parents, equipping self with skills needed for productive occupation, achieving gender-based social role, establishing mature relationships with peers of both sexes, choosing a partner, establishing a family, managing a home and establishing a career" [12].

Included in the study are the three major sources of happiness: Things, people and activities. When it comes to things as a source of happiness, the top five are: food, high grades, electronic gadgets, passing grade and new clothes. This finding implies that food which is a basic need is regarded by the female teenagers as the highest provider of happiness. Truly by using Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs,

an individual must satisfy lower level needs before progressing to meet higher level needs [13]. The finding implies then that the female youth are still in the process of satisfying the lowest level need. As students, these female teenagers crave for high grades or passing grades since favorable grades creates a higher self-esteem.

Table 1. Personality type and concept of happiness of the young Filipina

Category	Frequency	Percent
<b>Personality Type of Female Teenagers</b>		
Extravert	539	80.90
Introvert	132	19.10
<b>Concept of Happiness</b>		
Feeling of belongingness, appreciated	354	51.23
Family, love of and for family	289	41.82
Accomplishments/achievements	23	3.33
Possession of gadgets	20	2.89
Spiritual-related	5	0.72

This study corroborates with the usual observation that the Generation Z are fond of using electronic gadgets and the use of these gadgets give them happiness [14]. The Filipino youth, as mentioned in ABS-CBN news are one among the top users of electronic gadgets. Having new clothes is also included as the top five provider of happiness. Other sources of happiness as according to the female teenagers are: books, pets, gift, new shoes, musical instruments, make up kit, motorbike, jewelry, and bible.

As regards to people as a source of happiness, mother comes first, followed by father, siblings, friends and girlfriend/boyfriend. Most of the female teenagers, regard their mother as a primary source of happiness followed by the father. Mothers are the first provider of nurture to children, and in the Philippine culture, the mother usually attends to the needs of their children including doing the household chores. Other provider of happiness to the female teenagers are relatives, actors, actresses, crush, teacher, online friends, townmate and textmate.

The top five sources of happiness when it comes to activities according to the female teenagers are the following: eating, listening to music, engaging in social media activities, chatting with friends, and engaging in any activity with bf/gf. As mentioned above, food is the first thing that gives happiness to the female teenagers, hence it coincides with eating as the first activity that provides happiness. The finding also reveals that one of the top five activities that gives happiness

is engagement in social media activities. As widely observed, youth of today are fond of social media activities.

As to the rank of the three general sources of happiness, people rank first, followed by activities, and things ranked third.

The distribution of female teenagers according to level of happiness is shown in table 3. There were three levels used in measuring the level of happiness of the female teenagers: very happy, happy and neutral. The female teenagers in are generally happy. As shown in the table, more than 60 percent of them are pretty happy and very happy. This finding corroborates with the survey conducted across thirty two countries among millennial generation where in Filipinos were considered the happiest and the least stressed in the world. The happiness level of Filipinos was 83 percent [15]. Young adolescent Dutch girls are slightly higher with 84% to 92% happiness [16].

Table 2. Distribution according to sources of happiness

Category	Mean Rank	Rank
<b>Source of Happiness (Things)</b>		
Food	2.80	1
High grades	3.03	2
Electronic gadgets	3.03	3
Passing grade	3.95	4
New clothes	5.02	5
<b>Source of Happiness (People)</b>		
Mother	1.66	1
Father	2.50	2
Siblings	3.58	3
Friends	4.02	4
Girlfriend/boyfriend	5.21	5
<b>Source of Happiness (Activities)</b>		
Eating	2.83	1
Listening to music	4.07	2
Chatting with friends	4.62	3
Social media activities	4.67	4
Activities with boyfriend/girlfriend	4.95	5

Table 3. Distribution according to level of happiness

Category	Frequency (n=690)	Percent
<b>Level of Happiness</b>		
Very Happy	112	16.20
Pretty Happy	324	46.90
Neutral	255	36.90

The table below shows that course, religion and mother's occupation are significantly associated with the female teenagers' concept of happiness. Happiness means family, love of and for family, and bonding with family for female teenagers enrolled in Business and Hotel Management courses while those enrolled in criminology, education, fisheries and information technology happiness means feeling of contentment, belongingness and appreciation. New Zealand adolescents take material wealth, health situation and school experience as provider of life satisfaction. [17]. The findings of this study corroborates with other studies that religion is correlated with happiness [16], [19].

**Table 4. Relationship between profile of the female teenagers, personality type and their concept of happiness.**

Variables	DF	Com-puted X2	Prob-ability	Statistical Inference
Course	24	73.46	0.000	Significant
Year	12	13.685	0.321	Not significant
Age	4	0.519	0.972	Not significant
Religion	4	13.83	0.008	Significant
BirthOrder	12	28.544	0.966	Not significant
Number of siblings	44	28.544	0.966	Not significant
<b>Parents' Highest Educational Attainment</b>				
Father	32	23.819	0.851	Not significant
Mother	28	29.634	0.380	Not significant
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>				
Father	44	39.009	0.685	Not significant
Mother	32	67.514	0.000	Significant
Personality Type	4	3.755	0.440	Not significant

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings presented in the discussion, it is concluded that the female teenagers' happiness greatly depends on the course they are enrolled in, the religion they are affiliated with and the occupation of their mother.

Based on the conclusion made, the researcher needs to feedback the findings of this study to school authorities so that the female teenagers will be given proper guidance and proper intervention program. Researchers who are interested to venture on topic similar to this should include the males and broaden the target population to young adult students.

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