

Happiness perception of UG students in Kottayam and Ernakulam districts

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Abstract

Background and objectives: Happiness is the experience of joy, contentment and a sense of wellbeing. Gratitude is the thankful appreciation of what we have. This study was conducted to ascertain the relationship between happiness and gratitude. Also to determine the socio demographic and socio economic factors that are affecting and boosting the happiness of UG students in Kottayam and Ernakulam districts.

Methods: An interventional study was conducted among UG students of 4 colleges, who were selected by simple random method. Happiness score was calculated by filling Oxford Happiness questionnaire, a semi structured standard questionnaire was given to collect socio demographic data. Pre and post interventional happiness scores were noted and analysed.

Results and Discussion: In this study it was found that students of Kottayam district has highest score (mean happiness score =4.29) whereas Ernakulam district scored (4.02). Among the colleges where study was conducted, Baseliious college students have the highest mean happiness score i.e.(4.40). Mean total of happiness scores of students of Kottayam and Ernakulam was found to be 4.16.Among departments, 3rd year sociology students of BCM college have the highest happiness score (4.72).This study confirms the significant relationship between gratitude and happiness ($p=0.000$), (SD= 0.42),(correlation= 0.7). A positive correlation was seen between happiness score of students and education of their father (0.045) and mother (0.103) ,income of their family(0.085) ,number of close friends(0.03) and relatives to support(0.085), stress relieving factors like talking with friends (0.04),talking with relatives (0.06),meditation(0.01),yoga(0.04)and health (0.13),confidence for achieving goals (0.26). There is a positive correlation between happiness scores and music (0.08), social media (0.03) and academic factors (0.01). Negative correlation was shown between happiness scores and gender as it goes from female to male (-0.08), chatting with strangers (-0.11)and with other factors causing stress like control by parents (-0.101),control by elders (-0.03),family situation (-0.19),career(-0.01),love matters(-0.06) and financial problem (-0.05).

Conclusion: In this study happiness scores of students of Kottayam and Ernakulam districts were calculated. Students of Kottayam were found to be happier than Ernakulam. According to this study gratitude and happiness are inter related as after intervention, happiness score increased. Other demographic and socioeconomic factors which increase happiness are increase of income, education of parents, number of close friends, number of close relatives to support. Stress relieving factors like music, yoga, meditation, social media, talking with relatives, talking with friends were shown to increase happiness of students. Students who are happiest are more confident and healthier. But stress relieving factor-'chatting with strangers' show a negative impact on their happiness. Female students were happier than male students. Stress causing factors like control by parents, by elders, family situations, career, love matters, financial problems decrease their happiness whereas academic stress seems to be positively influence their happiness. Family situation and control by parents seem to affect majority of students negatively, detailed counselling to parents and parenting workshops are a must to improve current situation. It is recommended to policy makers and Government to make a new happiness policy after conducting similar studies.

Keywords

Gratitude, happiness perception, happiness policy, happiness score, intervention study, stress causing factors, stress relieving factors

1 INTRODUCTION

HAPPINESS is a sense of wellbeing, joy or contentment. Happiness is that feeling that comes over us when we know that life is good and we cannot help but smile. Happiness reflects a more emotional, situational and subjective state of wellbeing and its mental aspect may be exposed to more volatile and short term fluctuations. Happiness is the ultimate objective in life.

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Happiness is something we all desire, but not many achieve. Love, money, career and faith in God are the factors generally mentioned/agreed as important in

achieving happiness. Osho¹ said that happiness comes when we feel free, relaxed and are focused on love. In his book 'The monk who sold his Ferrari', Robin Sharma mentions that

the secret of happiness is simple: find out what you truly love to do and then direct all of your energy towards doing it. If you study the happiest, healthiest, most satisfied people of our world, you will see that each and every one of them has found their passion in life, and then spent their days pursuing it. This calling is almost always one that, in some way, serves others. Once you are concentrating your mind power and energy on a pursuit that you love, abundance flows into your life, and all your desires are fulfilled with ease and grace.

Happiness is expressed using different terms such as wellbeing, life satisfaction, Quality Of Life

(QOL) etc. Happiness has been studied by researchers from different aspects such as age, gender, marital status, employment status, political evaluations, macro and micro economy. Macroeconomics of happiness² is the quantitative and theoretical study of happiness, positive and negative affect, wellbeing, quality of life, life satisfaction and related concepts typically combining with economics. It typically treats happiness related measures rather than wealth, income or profit, as something to be maximized. Micro economics happiness² equation $W_{it} = \alpha + \beta x_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$

W_{it} = reported wellbeing of individual 'i' at a time t, and x_{it} is a vector of known variables which include socio demographic and socio economic characteristics.

No amount of goals achieved will actually make us happy. We have to change what our outlook is in order to be happy. Both Tony Robbins³ - (American philanthropist and life coach) and Joel Osteen³ (American Pastor, televangelist and author) talk about the benefit of being thankful for things we currently have. Gratitude is the thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude people acknowledge the goodness in their lives. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity and build strong relationships. Gratitude helps people refocus on what they have instead of what they lack. Although it may feel contrived at first, this mental state grows stronger with use and practise.

According to world happiness report of United Nations 2019⁴, Finland is the happiest country in the world with Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Netherlands holding the next top positions. India's Happiness Ranking dropped from 133 (2018) to 140 (2019)⁵. Manorama News survey 2017⁶ said that happiness index of Keralites stands at 4.4 out of 10.

Only 22 of 193 governments of UN have happiness policies. As Achim Steiner, administrator of UNDP said, "There is global recognition that in the last 20-30 years, we have prioritized economic growth, assuming that wellbeing would follow. We have been reminded recently that this is a mistake - equality, sustainability, and opportunity for future generations is what enables wellbeing. This is what our societies should pursue at the beginning of the 21st century."⁷

Politicians and policy makers should focus on these areas to create greater happiness during this age of anxiety⁷:

1. Flexible workplaces: Investments in improving working conditions produce huge returns for businesses, in terms of increasing productivity and profitability, and for individuals' happiness. Simple changes like- increasing workplace flexibility and boosting access to paid leave lead to performance improvements, increases worker satisfaction, in addition to significantly lower turnover.
2. Mental Health: Developed countries are confronting a serious mental health crisis that is devastating communities

and hurting the global economy, with just a quarter of people with mental health challenges in developed nations receiving treatment. Fortunately, investments in mental health can be extremely effective and cost-effective. The 2018 global happiness report finds that every dollar spent on mental health prevention and treatment leads to an extra 2.5 dollars of GDP, by bringing more people into the workforce and increasing productivity. Digital and telehealth services could improve cost-effectiveness by up to 5-fold and would cost just 0.1 percent of global GDP.

3. Social Inclusion: Happier societies tend to be those in which all share in the benefits of economic development, social capital, education, and political power. While ethnically similar countries like the Scandinavian nations have an advantage, governments around the world can (and must) do more to ensure specific socioeconomic, ethnic, or religious groups are not left behind.

4. A new education system: Improvements must be made in our curricula to focus more on social engagement and life-skills such as perseverance and resilience not only significantly improve standardized test scores but also improve young people's emotional well-being. Bhutan is pioneering new positive education interventions that produce academic success and greater happiness.

5. Climate Crisis: The growing climate crisis is making it harder for governments to keep their people happy. Governments need to do more to ameliorate the impacts of climate change. Over the short term, that means better storm and disaster infrastructure and more access to insurance and programs to help families relocate if needed. Over the long term, action is needed to slow the pace of climate change.

6. 21st Century Skills: The modern economy requires new skills for workers to thrive. The digital revolution has sadly left millions of workers behind, as their skills, jobs, and even entire industries have been eliminated or automated. Governments need to find new ways to ensure the livelihoods and dignity of these workers. Around the world, policymakers are exploring options ranging from skills retraining programs to a universal basic income.

7. Income Inequality: Studies show that the absolute level of one's wealth tends to matter less to their happiness than their economic status relative to others. People in low- or middle-income countries with greater economic equality tend to be happier, therefore, than those with the same incomes in more unequal societies. Access to high-quality public services (health care, child care, and education, for example) help reduce the cost of living, while a living minimum wage can ensure a greater degree of economic justice.

8. Physical Health: Physical health problems place a major weight on the economy, because of non-employments, absenteeism, and increased health care costs. It also is one of the greatest sources of citizens' unhappiness, particularly in high-income countries, according to surveys. Spending more on preventative health is lowest-hanging fruit, in

terms of making people happier while also boosting the economy and lowering costs.

9. Busting Corruption: Corruption kills social trust and happiness. Lack of trust in one's community and in the government are devastating for personal happiness. Corruption not only erodes social trust and happiness, it leads to poorer provision of services that lead to further dissatisfaction. Quality of government is also strongly associated with longevity and positive health measures. Stronger anti-corruption laws, investigative authorities, greater transparency all go far to improve trust and happiness.

10. Happy Families: Happiness is vitally shaped by the quality of our marriages and parenting. In fact, people with high wellbeing spend on average 1.5 times as many hours with family than the global average. Family is the key to our mental health and sense of worth. Changes in the workplace, like flexible hours and family leave provisions, can go far in improving family-work balance, and in providing a support system for parents to raise healthy, positive, and happy children.

In this study, happiness scores of the college students in two districts of Kerala- Ernakulam and Kottayam are calculated by using Oxford happiness questionnaire⁸. Happiness perception; ie how they perceive happiness is noted by collecting socio-demographic and socioeconomic data and stress related and stress relieving factors, using semi structured standardised questionnaire. An interventional class about gratitude journal keeping⁹ will be taken and happiness score will be taken again after 21 days. Happiness scores of 2 districts will be compared and variables related to happiness and stress will be analysed. Difference between scores before and after intervention will be noted to trace out the relation between happiness and gratitude.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

In this era of anxiety and depression, incidents like suicides, homicides and other crimes are increasing worldwide. Untempered pursuit of happiness is the major cause of environmental exploitation and degradation. Failure in examinations led to 2413 suicides by the students in 2016.¹⁹ In India one student commit suicide every hour (National Crime Records Bureau-2015). No happiness or wellbeing policies are there in India or Kerala. In this context this study among UG students will give an idea about how happy are these students and which all variables are associated with their happiness and which are the factors related to their anxiety/stress. Comparison of happiness scores between two districts can also be done. Hope this study will be an eye opener for policy makers to implement its findings to formulate a Happiness Policy by conducting further studies like this among common people.

2 OBJECTIVES

- ⊙ To calculate pre and post interventional happiness score of under graduate students in Ernakulam and Kottayam districts.
- ⊙ To identify the socio demographic factors influencing happiness of under graduate students in Ernakulam and Kottayam districts.
- ⊙ To find out the socio economic factors that have an impact on happiness of students in Ernakulam and Kottayam districts.
- ⊙ To determine whether keeping a gratitude journal/list will improve happiness level of students.

3 BACKGROUND

HAPPINESS AND GRATITUDE

Happiness is the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile¹⁰. Gratitude and happiness are long researched topics. Gratitude means thankful appreciation of what we have or receive.

Psychology of gratitude and happiness

Researchers in Positive Psychology have found that gratitude and happiness are always strongly correlated¹¹. A possible theory is that gratitude moves people to experience more positive emotions, to thoroughly enjoy the good experiences, better their health, face adversity, and develop and maintain relationships of strength, which in turn makes you happier.

Three common ways people can express their gratitude are:

By being gracious of their past (i.e., think of positive childhood memories)

By being gracious for the present (i.e., taking time to be present and enjoy)

By being grateful for what's to come (i.e., hopeful and optimistic of the future)

"Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for." - Zig Ziglar

How does gratitude help to increase happiness?

Cognitive Neuroscientist, Mervyn Etienne MSC explains the science behind gratitude and increased wellbeing¹².

"Gratitude is important for our personal sense of value and as a shared attitude that builds community. Considered to be an emotional behavior as far as Roman times, both statesman Cicero and stoic philosopher Seneca consider it 'the mother of all virtues.' Contemporary science has shown

that gratitude improves resilience, psychological wellbeing and social relationships. And people who are more grateful have even greater wellbeing.

Recent research in the area of affective neuroscience have shown that when participants in the study were asked to rate the support and helping behaviors of individuals to people under threat, areas of brain associated with moral cognition, value judgment and theory of mind all lit up. In short feelings of gratitude activate brain regions associated with positive emotional states and moral values. If we appreciate the help others give us, we help ourselves as well as them. Learning to call to mind things and people you show gratitude to can improve your mental health and those to whom you are grateful."

In her book, *The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*, Sonja Lyubomirsky discusses eight ways gratitude boosts happiness.

1. Gratitude promotes savouring positive life experiences.
2. Gratitude may increase a sense of confidence and self-worth by encouraging you to consider what you value about your current life.
3. Gratitude helps to cope with difficulties.
4. Gratitude encourages kindness and other moral behaviour.
5. Gratitude helps strengthen relationships.
6. Gratitude inhibits envy.
7. Gratitude helps undermine negative emotions.
8. Gratitude keeps us from taking the good things for granted.

What are the factors that determine happiness?

Sonya Lyubomirsky (2007), a psychology researcher, theorized that there are three causes of happiness.¹¹

Genetic happiness set-point: is responsible for 50% of our happiness, determined by our personalities.

Intentional activity: accounts for about 40% of our happiness, meaning the activities that we intentionally set out to do throughout our lives, that can better our well-being or increase our happiness.

Environmental circumstances: account for 10% of the reason we are happy, usually it depends on the circumstances that which we are surrounded with and how this encourages or inhibits skills and opportunities for us to achieve happiness (Lyubomirsky, 2007).

While there are different causes of happiness, one way for sure to bring about more happiness is gratitude.

How to write a gratitude journal ?

1. Take a notebook with blank pages.
2. Write in it every night before going to bed, the things you are grateful for Ex: memory, eyes, legs, health, home, family etc.
3. Write about your talents, things and people that make you happy.

4. Read it every morning on waking up.

5. This will boost your happiness and confidence thereby you are creating days that are amazing every day!

4 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Emmons, R.A., & McCullough, M.E. ¹³(2003) conducted a study on subjective wellbeing and gratitude, the group of people who kept weekly gratitude journals had significantly better results on a range of psychological and physical wellbeing measures than the people in either of two comparison groups. The gratitude journal people exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms, felt better about their lives as a whole, and were more optimistic about the upcoming week than the other two groups (who recorded hassles in one group or neutral life events in the other).

Participants who kept gratitude lists were more likely to have made progress toward important personal goals (academic, interpersonal, and health-based) over a two-month period compared to participants in the other experimental groups.

2. Ragnhild Elise Orstavik ¹⁴(2017) mentions about Norwegians who are the happiest people in the world. In World happiness report 2017 Norway is the happiest country. Main differences in happiness between countries depend on GDP per capita, social support and health. Studies have shown that happiest people are healthier ones. The World happiness report measures how we evaluate our own lives. Research on happiness and quality of life distinguishes three subjective goals: life satisfaction, positive emotions, and experience of meaning. Different factors can have different effects on these goals. Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman has shown that while income greatly influences how we evaluate our lives, health and behavior have a stronger connection to positive emotions.

3. Serife Didem, Yusuf Illeri, Aydan Yuceler¹⁵(2016) conducted a study in Konya Necmettin Erbakan University students. Questionnaire technique has been used. There was no relationship between income status and happiness scores of students. Highest happiness score belonged to health management students. Average happiness score of students whose parents are illiterate are higher than whose parents are high school and university graduates.

3. Kuykendall, Tay L, NG V¹⁶(2015) Numerous studies show a link between leisure engagement and subjective wellbeing (SWB). Findings based on 37 effect sizes and 11,834

individuals reveal that leisure engagement and SWB are moderately associated and mediated by leisure satisfaction. Experimental studies reveal that leisure interventions enhance SWB. Compared with working samples, retired samples exhibit a stronger relation between leisure engagement and SWB, and between leisure satisfaction and SWB. Measures of the frequency and diversity of leisure engagement are more strongly associated with SWB than measures of time spent in leisure. Overall, although not minimizing top-down influences, results are consistent with bottom-up models of SWB and suggest that the leisure domain is a potentially important target for enhancing SWB.

4. Max Haller, Markus Hadler¹⁷(2006) In this paper, subjective wellbeing, as measured by survey questions on happiness and life satisfaction, is investigated from a sociological-comparative point of view. A distinction is made between life satisfaction and happiness; the former is more seen as the outcome of an evaluation process including material and social aspirations and achievements, the latter as an outcome of positive experiences, particularly close personal relationships. A comparative multilevel regression analysis of happiness in 41 nations around the world was carried out using World Value Survey; Study concluded that what counts most is the ability to cope with life, including subjective health, financial satisfaction, close relations and economic perspectives for improvement in future, both individual level and at the level of society.

5. Andrew E Clark, Andrew J Oswald¹⁸(2002) Happiness regressions were estimated using large random samples. Relative coefficient of income and life events on happiness were used to calculate monetary 'compensating amount' for each kind of life event. Paper calculate impact of different life events by evaluating how significant amount of money can compensate that loss or how much amount of money can make them as happy as a particular life event. Ex: Getting married is calculated to bring happiness similar to having an additional income of £70,000 per annum. New method can be used to value any kind of life event.

5 MATERIALS AND METHODS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What is the average happiness score of under graduate students in Ernakulam and Kottayam districts?
- What are the factors affecting happiness of under graduate students in Ernakulam and Kottayam districts?
- What is the effect of keeping a gratitude journal/list on the happiness of a student?

HYPOTHESIS:

- There is no significant relationship between pre and post interventional happiness score.

- There is no significant relationship between happiness and demographic factors.
- There is no significant relationship between happiness and socio economic factors.

STUDY DESIGN:

Interventional study-A class was taken about happiness and gratitude and how they can improve happiness by writing gratitude journal. Students will be asked to keep a gratitude journal for 21 days. Happiness score during intervention class and after 21 days are compared.

Pre-test post-test research design

SETTING

BCM college Kottayam, Maharajas college Ernakulam, Baseliious college Kottayam, St. Teresas college Ernakulam

SAMPLING

Simple random sampling

By lottery method 4 colleges are selected and by random number table method students are selected from each college. 143 students from BCM college, 62 from Baseliious college, 103 students from St. Teresas college and 90 students from Maharajas were selected.

SAMPLE SIZE

398

Sample size was calculated using Yamanes formula²⁰ $n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$

N=Total number of UG students in 4 colleges, n=sample size

INCLUSION CRITERIA

UG students of arts and science colleges in Kottayam and Ernakulam districts.

UG students who are willing to participate.

Those who are available at the time of pre, post and interventional period of study.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Those who are not willing to participate.

Those who are not available during the study.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

* Primary data collection using Oxford Happiness Questionnaire to find out happiness score and semi structured questionnaire to collect socio demographic and socio economic factors.

* Secondary data collection : Online journals, Research papers, articles, sites and blogs.

PLAN OF ANALYSIS

SPSS, Excel, paired T test

METHODOLOGY

This interventional study was conducted on February-March (2020). By lottery method four colleges were selected from Kottayam and Ernakulam districts. From these colleges students from various departments (selected by lottery method) were selected using random number table method. Students were asked to fill semi structured questionnaire at the end of which is oxford happiness questionnaire. From semi structured questionnaire socio economic and demographic data were collected and from oxford happiness questionnaire happiness scores were calculated. Then an intervention class about gratitude journal writing and importance of gratitude to improve happiness was taken. Students were asked to write gratitude journal for 21 days. After 21 days again they were asked to fill oxford happiness questionnaire to calculate post interventional happiness scores.

Oxford happiness Questionnaire

There are 29 questions each question must be answered by entering a number.

Questions 1, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29 are reverse questions

Table 1
Scales -Oxford happiness questionnaire

1	strongly disagree
2	moderately disagree
3	slightly disagree
4	slightly agree
5	moderately agree
6	strongly agree

Calculating the score

Step 1. Items marked (R) should be scored in reverse:

If it is "1," cross it out and change it to a "6."

Change "2" to a "5"

Change "3" to a "4"

Change "4" to a "3"

Change "5" to a "2"

Change "6" to a "1"

Step 2. Add the numbers for all 29 questions. (Use the converted numbers for the 12 items that are reverse scored.)

Step 3. Divide by 29. So happiness score = the total (from

College	MeanHappiness score
BCM	4.24
Baselious	4.40
St.Terasas	4.04
Maharajas	4.00

step 2) divided by 29.

Table 2

Interpretation of the

score

Score	Interpretation
1-2	Not happy
2-3	Somewhat unhappy
3-4	Not particularly happy or unhappy
4	Somewhat happy or moderately happy. Satisfied
4-5	Rather happy; pretty happy
5-6	Very happy
6	Too happy

Pre and post happiness scores and other variables related to happiness like stress causing factors, stress relieving factors ,income, gender etc from semi structured questionnaire were tabulated using excel and analysed using SPSS and excel. Paired T test of pre and post happiness scores was done, mean of happiness scores of two districts, 4 colleges and different departments were calculated. Correlation between happiness score of students and other variables were calculated. Analyzed data were presented in forms of tables and graphs.

6 RESULTS

Table 3.

Mean /Average of happiness scores of UG students of different colleges in Kottayam and Ernakulam districts

Table 4.

Mean/Average happiness scores of students in Kottayam and Ernakulam districts

District	MeanHappiness score
Kottayam district	4.29
EKM district	4.02
Mean total	4.16

Above tables shows the mean happiness scores of colleges and districts-Kottayam and Ernakulam. Mean total of happiness scores of UG students of Kottayam and Ernakulam districts is 4.16. Mean happiness score of students in Ernakulam district is 4.02 and that of Kottayam district is 4.29.

Baselious college has the highest score 4.40, whereas Maharajas college has the lowest score 4.00. BCM college has a score in between i.e. 4.24 and St.Teresas scores 4.04. (Interpretation of score 4-5 is rather happy or pretty happy, 3-4 unhappy and 4 satisfied.)

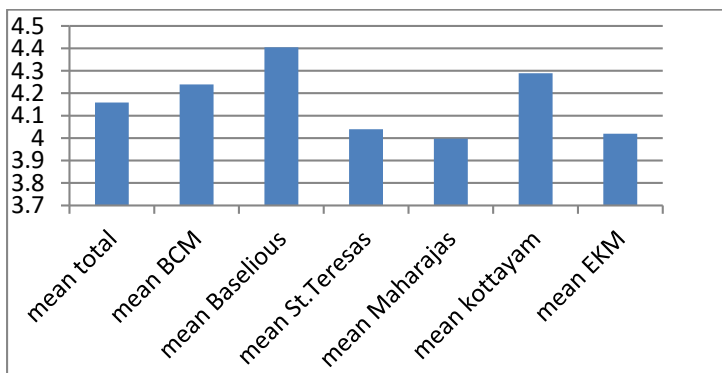


Figure 1. Mean of Happiness scores of UG students in Kottayam and Ernakulam districts

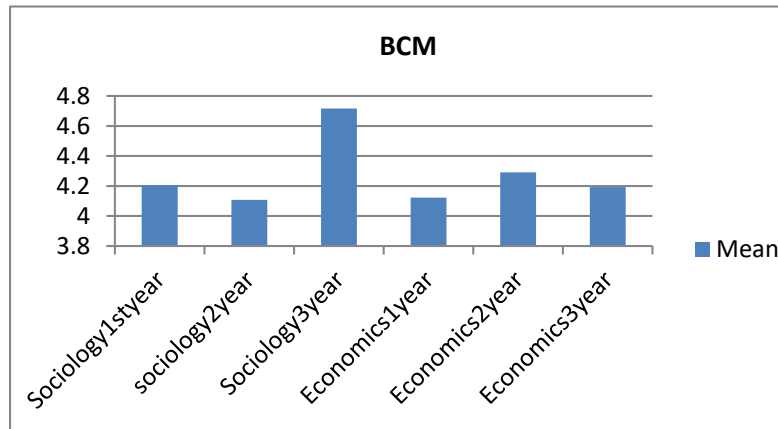


Figure 2. Department wise happiness scores of BCM college students

This figure shows happiness scores of students in different departments of BCM college, Kottayam. In this maximum score goes to BA sociology department 3rd year students(4.72) and BA Sociology 2nd year students minimum score (4.11).Happiness scores of other department students are-BA Sociology 1st year (4.21),BA Economics 1st year (4.12),BA Economics 2nd year (4.29),BA Economics 3rd year (4.19) respectively.

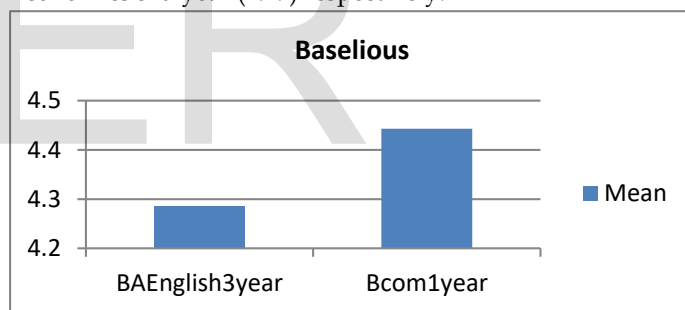


Figure 3. Department wise happiness scores of students in Baselious college

This figure shows mean happiness scores of BA English 3rd year students (4.29)and mean Bcom 1st year students (4.44) of Baselious college Kottayam.

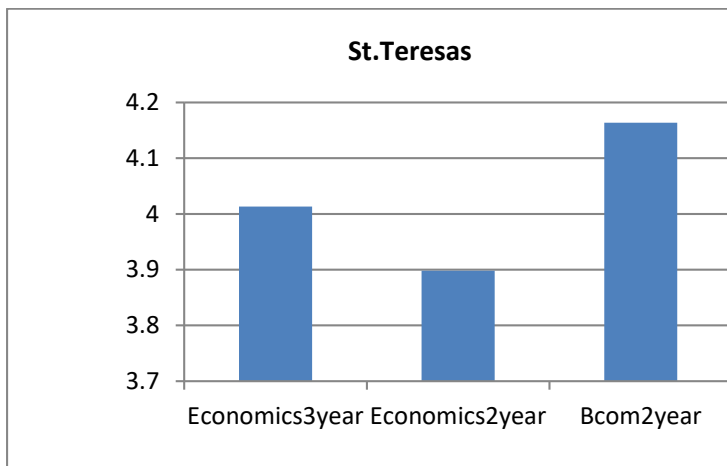


Figure 4

Department wise happiness scores of St.Terasas college students

This figure shows department wise happiness scores of St.Terasas college students:- BA Economics 2nd year(3.90),BA Economics 3rd year(4.01),Bcom 2nd year (4.16). Bcom 2nd year students have highest score and Economics 2nd year students have lowest score.

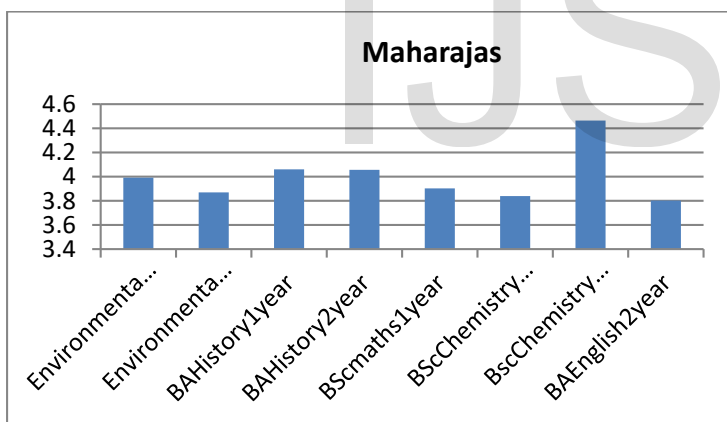


Figure 5

Department wise happiness scores of students in Maharajas college

This figure shows mean happiness scores of students in different departments of Maharajas college. BSc chemistry 3rd year students (4.46) have highest score and BA English 2nd year students have the lowest score (3.82) . Scores of other departments are Environmental Chemistry 1st year (3.99), Environmental Chemistry 2nd year (3.87), BA History 1st year (4.06), BSc Maths 1st year (3.90),BSc Chemistry 1st year (3.84) respectively.

Table 5.

Paired sample test-pre and post happiness scores

Happiness score	Mean	N	Standard deviation	T value	Correlation	Significance
Pre Happiness score	4.14	269	0.54	-6.39	0.707	0.000
Post Happiness score	4.30	269	0.56			

The above tables show the pre and post interventional happiness score from total 269 students who were present during pre and post intervention class. Paired T test was performed and we got t value =-6.39. From t value probability was calculated (p=0.00001) which is significant, which means that gratitude journaling improves happiness of a person. Correlation of pre and post scores was found to be 0.707 which is also significant. Standard deviation of pre and post happiness score is (0.42).

Correlation of different variables and Happiness score

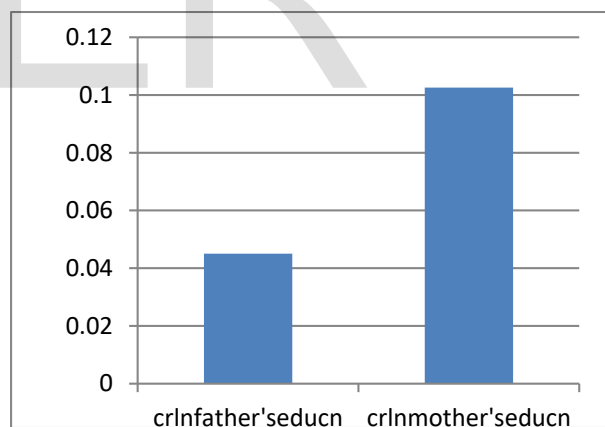


Figure 6.

Correlation of happiness scores of students with fathers' and mothers' education

This figure shows positive correlation between happiness score of students and education of their father (0.045) and mother (0.103).

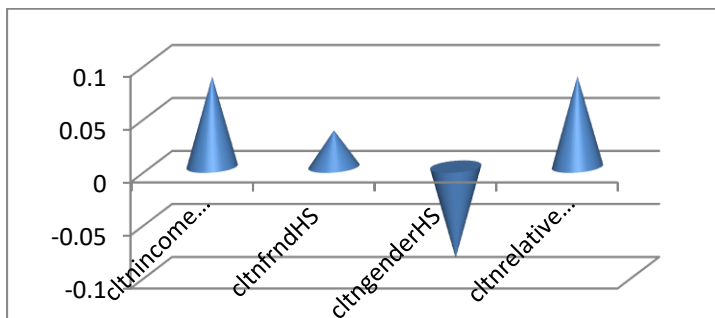


Figure 7.

Correlation of H.S. of students with socio economic and demographic factors

This chart shows positive correlation of happiness score of students and income of their family(0.085)number of close friends (0.03)number of close relatives(0.085). Negative correlation in gender shows that male students have less happiness score than female students (-0.08).

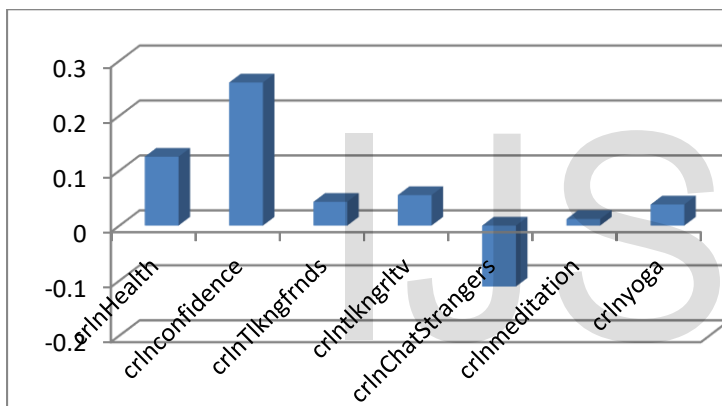


Figure 8.

Correlation of H.S. of students with stress relieving factors

Figure 8 shows the correlation of happiness score and stress relieving factors like talking with friends (0.04),talking with relatives (0.06), chatting with strangers(-0.11),meditation(0.01),yoga(0.04)and health (0.13),confidence (0.26).

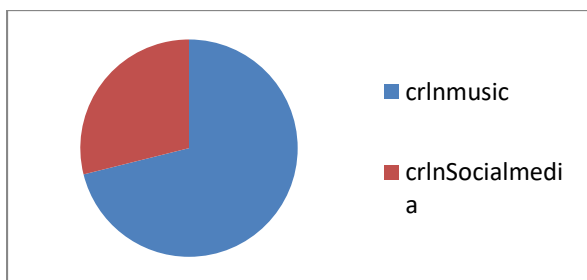


Figure 9.

Correlation of H.S. of students with music and social media

This pie chart shows the positive correlation between happiness scores of students and music(0.08) & social media(0.03).

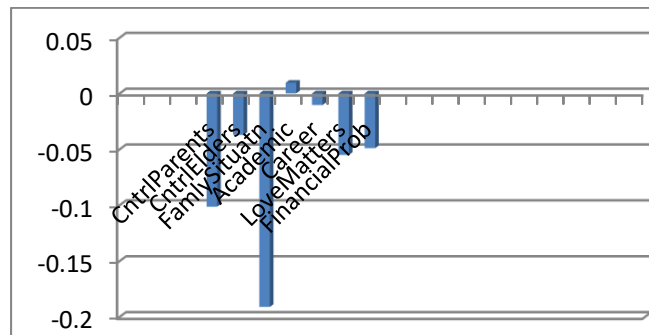


Figure 10.

Correlation of H.S. of students with factors causing stress

Figures 10 shows the correlation between happiness scores of students and factors causing stress. There is negative correlation between all factors except variable 'academic'(0.01). Correlation coefficient of other factors :- control by parents (-0.101),control by elders (-0.03), family situation(-0.19),career(-0.01),love matters(-0.06) and financial problem (-0.05).

7 DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to determine relationship between happiness and gratitude, also to find out if happiness was related to socioeconomic and demographic factors. This study confirms the significant relationship between gratitude and happiness (p=0.00001). It was found that students of Kottayam district has highest happiness score. This may be due to income factor or educational status of parents as in this study they are found to increase happiness. But study conducted by Serife Didem15 failed to obtain a relationship between happiness scores of students and income, this may be due to low sample size.

Among departments, 3rd year sociology students of BCM college have the highest happiness score and BA English 2nd year students of Maharajas have the lowest score. Income, education, social support also willing to help others may contribute to increased happiness of BCM college Sociology students.

Positive and negative correlation was seen between different variables and happiness scores. A strong positive correlation was seen between happiness score of students and education of their father and mother, income of their family, number of close friends and relatives to support, stress relieving factors like talking with friends, talking with relatives, meditation, yoga and health, confidence for achieving goals .There is a positive correlation between happiness scores and music, social media and academic factors. All the factors they denoted as stress relieving were found to increase happiness except

chatting with strangers, may be due to the fear or lack of trust for strangers.

Negative correlation was shown between happiness scores and gender as it goes from female to male but this may not be significant as males participated were only 7.3%; and with other factors causing stress like control by parents, control by elders, family situation, love matters and financial problem. Career was under stress causing factor but it is shown to increase happiness may be it is a goal which motivate them to succeed.

Human beings are seeking various ways to find happiness as they miss small things around them which are waiting for their appreciation. If feeling grateful for what we have can increase our happiness to an extent and provide more things to be grateful for, we have to educate the students about how they can be happy by merely keeping a gratitude journal or by being grateful for what they have. Thus we can improve health and confidence of future generation as happiness, health and confidence are interrelated. Thereby we can build a mentally and physically healthy and happy society. Future studies are recommended among students and common men to confirm the factors affecting their happiness and to promote factors that are relieving their stress. Parents must be aware of negative impact of their control on their child's happiness and must take step to improve family situation which is most important factor, students say to affect their happiness.

8 CONCLUSION

In this study students of Kottayam were found to be happier than Ernakulam. Among them Baseliious college students are happier. According to this study gratitude and happiness are inter related as after intervention, happiness score increased.

Other demographic and socioeconomic factors which increase happiness are income, education of parents, number of close friends, number of close relatives to support. Students show increased happiness score as income increased from low to high. Children of highly educated parents (PG), especially educated mother were happier than those of illiterate or school level. As the number of close friends and close relatives increases so does the happiness score; happier are those who have more relatives to support than who have more close friends.

Stress relieving factors like music, yoga, meditation, social media, talking with relatives, talking with friends were shown to increase happiness of students, of these music and talking with relatives are more significant. In this study a positive relation with happiness of students and their health and confidence in achieving goals was established. Students who are happiest are more confident and healthier. But stress relieving factor-'chatting with strangers' show a negative impact on their happiness.

Stress causing factors like control by parents, by elders, family situations, career, love matters, financial problems decrease their happiness whereas academic stress seems to be positively influence their happiness. Family situation and control by parents seem to affect majority of students negatively, detailed counselling to parents and parenting workshops are a must to improve current situation. Female students came out to be happier than male students.

Only happy and contented parents can bring out happy children who are the building blocks of our country's future. It is recommended to formulate a 'Happiness policy' by the government to provide a flexible working environment ,to diagnose and treat addictions and mental illness, to reduce anxiety of any disasters, to provide income equality, to develop a new education system, share economic developments, bust corruptions and to develop happy families after conducting similar studies.

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