Happiness among Indian and Canadian University Students: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Present study compared the Happiness of Indian and Canadian university students. The sample consisted of 182 university students, 91 students (35 male and 56 female) each from India and Canada (41 male and 50 female) purposively selected from Delhi and Ontario. The researcher used descriptive survey method for the present study. The 29 items Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) developed by Michael Argyle and Peter Hills was used for collection of data. Data obtained were analyzed using statistics like Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test. Findings indicate significant difference in the happiness of Indian and Canadian university students, with Canadian university students were found to be happier than their Indian counterparts. Significant difference also exists in the happiness of Indian female university students and Canadian female university students, with Canadian female university students were found to be happier than their Indian counterparts. Results further reveal no significant difference in happiness of Indian male university students and Canadian male students.

One of the main paths in psychology is to determine the meaning and indexes of mental diseases and mental health. Nowadays, mental diseases are regarded as one of the most important aspects in the social health. Due to the physicians' opinions, more than fifty percent of physical illnesses have mental origin. It is also estimated that one person out of twelve, may spend his/her life in the mental hospitals (Bird, 1986). Furthermore, research from positive psychology demonstrates that it is more important to focus on developing positive characteristics rather than on avoiding or diminishing negative ones, such as depression. Happiness is one of such positive characteristics which need to be focused in the contemporary society. The happiness can be defined as an individual's global assessment of positive/ negative emotional experiences and satisfaction with life. Argyle, Martin and Crossland (1989) defined happiness as the average level of satisfaction over a specific period along with the frequency and degree of positive affect and the relative absence of negative affect. Some educators (Noddings, 2003) suggest that happiness may be a worthwhile aim of education, and that promoting prevention and psychological health are more important for student success than treating mental health problems and risky behaviors after problems have emerged (Flay, 2002). Considering the above theoretical basis, present study aims to compare the happiness of Indian and Canadian university students.

Objectives of the study
1. To study the happiness of Canadian university students.
2. To study the happiness of Indian university students.
3. To compare the happiness of Canadian and Indian university students.
4. To compare the happiness of Canadian male university students and Indian male university students.
5. To compare the happiness of Canadian female university students and Indian female university students.

Hypotheses of the study

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:
1. There exists no significant difference between the happiness of Canadian and Indian university students.
2. There exists no significant difference between the happiness of Canadian male university students and Indian male university students.
3. There exists no significant difference between the happiness of Canadian female university students and Indian female university students.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 182 university students from India and Canada were took part in the study. 91 university students (35 males and 56 females) were from India and 91 university students (40 males and 51 females) were from Canada. Hence the study consisted of 75 males and 107 female university students.

Measure

The Oxford Happiness Index was used to assess the level of happiness in the individuals forming sample. The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University. The instrument contained 29 items having five dimensions of happiness viz. 1. Life satisfaction, 2. Joy, 3. Self-esteem, 4. Calm, 5. Control and 6. Efficacy. The OHI demonstrated high scale reliabilities with values 0.92.

RESULTS

1. **Categorization of Happiness of Indian university students: Frequency and Percentage**

Happiness Level	Frequency	Percentage
High level of Happiness (Above 58.30)	18 students	19.78
Moderate (between 46.40 to 58.30)	31 students	34.06
Low level of happiness (Less than 46.40)	42 students	46.15
Total	**91 students**	**100.00%**

Table-1 depicts that out of the total 91 Indian university students, 18 students i.e. 19.78% have high level of happiness, 31 students i.e. 34.06 % have moderate level of happiness and the rest 42 students i.e. 46.15% have low level of happiness.

2. **Categorization of Happiness of Canadian university students: Frequency and Percentage**

Happiness Level	Frequency	Percentage
High level of Happiness (Above 58.30)	33 students	36.26
Moderate (between 46.40 to 58.30)	46 students	50.55
Low level of happiness (Less than 46.40)	12 students	13.19
Total	**91 students**	**100.00%**

Table-1 depicts that out of the total 91 Indian university students, 33 students i.e. 36.26% have high level of happiness, 46 students i.e. 50.55 % have moderate level of happiness and the rest 12 students i.e. 13.19% have low level of happiness.

COMPARISONS

3. **Comparison of Happiness of Canadian and Indian university students**

Group	N	M	SD	t	Level of Significance
Canadian students	91	55.65	9.67		
				4.64	Significant at .01 Level
Indian students	91	47.72	13.19		

Table-3 depicts a significant difference at 0.01 levels between the happiness of Indian university students and Canadian university students, with Canadian university students were found to be happier than Indian university students. Hence the earlier stated hypothesis "there exists no significant difference between the happiness of Canadian university students and Indian university students" was rejected.

4. **Comparison of Happiness of Canadian male and Indian male university students**

Group	N	M	SD	t	Level of Significance
Canadian Male students	41	56.61	10.65		
				0.67	Not Significant
Indian Male students	35	54.88	11.71		

Table-4 reveals no significant difference between the happiness of Canadian male university students and Indian male university students. Hence the earlier stated hypothesis "There exists no significant difference between the happiness of Canadian male university students and Indian male university students" was accepted.

5. **Comparison of Happiness of Canadian female and Indian female university students**

Group Significance	N	M	SD	t	Level of
Canadian Female students	50	54.86	08.83		
				2.91	Significant at .01 Level
Indian Female students	56	43.54	12.29		

Table-5 depicts a significant difference at 0.01 levels between the happiness of Indian female university students and Canadian female university students, with Canadian female university students were found to be happier than Indian female university students. Hence the earlier stated hypothesis "there exists no significant difference between the happiness of Canadian female university students and Indian female university students" was rejected.

Discussion

Present study is an attempt to explore the happiness of university students from two countries representing two different cultures. It was found that Canadian university students were happier than heir Indian counterparts. This is might be due to the cultural difference and influence of culture in the life style of university students from both the countries. The significant difference in the happiness of Indian and Canadian female university students might be due to the fact that Canadian female students find no interference of parents/society/culture in their way of living.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the difference between happiness of Canadian and Indian university students. What is more interesting (as it was showed in this study) is that Canadian female university students were found to be happier than their Indian counterparts. Further research should identify the reasons for differences in such case. Although in the present study the difference between happiness of Canadian male and Indian male university students is not statistically significant, may be due to the size of the sample, but it is evident that culture bears a relationship with happiness.

References

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