

## Happiness and Forgiveness among College Students

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### Abstract

The present study was conducted to identify the difference in Happiness and Forgiveness among college students and to find a correlation between these two variables using Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Argyle and Hills, 2000) for measuring happiness and Heartland Forgiveness Scale (Thompson & Synder, 2003) for measuring forgiveness. The data comprised of 100 students out of which 50 were Male students & 50 were Female students. The statistical technique used was t-test and Partial correlation. The present study found that there was a significant difference in Happiness and Forgiveness across gender and a weak correlation was found between Happiness and forgiveness. Mean of male students were greater than females students in both variables.

**Key words:** Happiness, Forgiveness, College Students.

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### Introduction

Happiness is based on the questions of why some people are happier than others or why some have more capacity for happiness after experiencing negative situations. It refers to the subjective assessment of whether a person is happy or unhappy, can be evaluated as a psychological state of well-being or contentment (Lyubomirsky, 2001). Individuals who have a high level of subjective happiness have more positive thoughts about themselves (Lee & Im, 2007), more satisfying social relationships, and spend less time alone (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Studies on subjective happiness have shown a positive relationship with life satisfaction (Garcia & Siddiqui, 2009), subjective vitality (Akin, 2012), self-perceptions of well-being (Diener, 2002), satisfying relationships (Diener & Seligman, 2002), mental health (Liem, Lustig, & Dillon, 2010), and self-acceptance (Krause & Ellison, 2003; Maltby et al., 2004). In contrast,

subjective happiness was negatively associated with presence of depressive symptoms (Chaplin, 2006). Forgiveness is a way of feeling and acting that involves not only letting go of negative feelings toward a person who has hurt or offended you, but also approaching him or her in a more compassionate way. Recent studies have shown that people who forgive feel happier, less worried, and more positive, both about themselves and about the person(s) that hurt them, than do people who are not as forgiving. College students who were more forgiving had lower blood pressure, heart rate, and bodily responses to stress. Enright, Freedman, and Rique (1998) view forgiveness as a "willingness to abandon one's right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly hurt us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her" Maltby & Barber (2005) examined the relationship between forgiveness and happiness using a two-

dimensional model of happiness (hedonic and eudaimonic happiness) and found a significant variance, albeit quite low, in both hedonic and eudaimonic happiness. Datu (2013) found out that gratitude served as the most robust determinant of well-being and Gratitude and forgiveness of self predicted subjective well-being. **Sabeelah et al. (2014)** found out a significant positive correlation between forgiveness personality traits and mental health. Satici & Uysal (2014) investigated the mediator and moderator effects of subjective happiness on the relationship between forgiveness and vengeance in Turkish university students and results indicated that subjective happiness partially mediated the relationship between vengeance and forgiveness. Jiang (2014) examined how individual group status and happiness influence forgiveness. An interaction effect between happiness and group status on forgiveness was found, that is, highly happy people tended to be more forgiving. Happy participants tended to forgive more when in-group or out-group members were hurt; sad participants tended to forgive less when in-group members rather than out-group members were hurt. Safaria (2014) in their study predicted a relationship between gratitude and forgiveness with happiness, explaining 28.9% of the variance. Devassy & Raj (2014) indicated a positive correlation between emotional competence and happiness in their study. However, no significant relationship was found between forgiveness and happiness. Gender differences were observed in happiness and four dimensions of emotional competence. Kirmani (2015) in their study found a significant difference in boys and girls on the measure of gratitude and forgiveness. Girls scored higher on these two measures. Satici (2015) in their study indicated that subjective happiness partially mediated the relationship between vengeance and forgiveness; however, subjective happiness did not moderate

the relationship between vengeance and forgiveness. Furthermore, results have shown that subjective happiness and forgiveness were negatively related to vengeance. Brown (2003) and Maltby et al. (2001) have found failure to forgive to be related to indicators of poor mental health such as depression and anxiety. Karremans et al. (2003) report suggest that forgiveness is related to positive affect and self-esteem.

### Objectives

To Assess The Level Of Happiness In Male And Female Among College Students.

To Assess The Level Of Forgiveness In Male And Female Among College Students.

To Assess The Relationship Between Forgiveness And Happiness Among College Students.

### Hypotheses

There Will Be A Significant Difference In The Level Of Happiness Among College Students

There Will Be A Significant Difference In The Level Of Forgiveness Among College Students.

There Will Be A Relationship Between Forgiveness And Happiness Among College Students.

### Methodology

#### Sample

A total sample of one hundred (100) students, 50 males and 50 females were selected for the study from purposive random sampling method, the data were collected from MAM

college and Gandhi Nagar college for females.

### Tools

**Oxford Happiness Questionnaire** (Argyle and Hills, 2000) is a 29-item measure of happiness that utilizes a six-point rating scale of agreement ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree). Reliability for this scale has been found to be 0.91.

**Heartland Forgiveness Scale (Thompson & Snyder, 2003)** It is an 18-item, self-report questionnaire that measures a person's dispositional forgiveness (i.e., the general tendency to be forgiving), rather than forgiveness of a particular event or person. The HFS consists of the Total HFS and three six-item

subscales (forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others and forgiveness of situations). Convergent validity, satisfactory internal consistency reliability, strong test-retest reliability.

### Results

The current study was conducted to measure the Happiness and forgiveness among college students. After the collection of data and scoring, statistical analysis was done to test the formulated hypotheses of the study. The results have been discussed below:

#### Table- 1 Mean, SD and t test of Male and Female students on Happiness.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	Sig(2-tailed)
Happiness	Male	50	4.47	.639	8.160	.00
	Female	50	3.59	.404		

Table-1 Mean, S D and t-test of Male and Female students of happiness. Mean of Male students is 4.47 and SD is .639. Mean of Female students is 3.59 and SD is .404. The t-value and P-value of both Male and Female students came out to be 8.160 and .00 respectively, which indicates that the results are significant.

#### Table- 2 Mean, SD and t test of Male and Female students on 4 dimensions of forgiveness.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	Sig(2-tailed)
Forgiveness of self	Male	50	24.2400	3.22338	6.432	.00
	Female	50	20.5200	2.51721		
Forgiveness of others	Male	50	21.4800	4.14158	1.753	.08
	Female	50	20.000	4.29998		
Forgiveness of situation	Male	50	20.8000	4.98979	-.500	.61
	Female	50	21.2800	4.61161		
Total	Male	50	66.5200	7.42923	3.227	.00
	Female	50	61.8000	7.19410		

Table- 2 show the mean, SD, t-values and p-values on all the 4 dimensions of forgiveness of both Male and Female students. Mean and SD on the dimensions of Forgiveness of self, Forgiveness of others and Forgiveness of situation. Mean for Male is 24.2400, 21.4800, 20.8000 and SD is 3.22338, 4.14158, 4.98979 and 7.42923 and total of male is 66.5200 respectively. Mean of Female students is 20.5200, 20.000, 21.2800 and SD is 2.51721, 4.29998, 4.61161 and total of female is 61.8000 respectively. The t-value and P-value, of both Male and Female students came out to be t-value is 6.432, 1.753, -.500 and 3.227 p-value is .00, .08, .61 and .00 which indicates that the results of forgiveness of self and forgiveness of situation are significant and results of others and total is significant.

**Table- 3 Correlation between happiness and forgiveness**

Variables		Happiness	Forgiveness
<b>Happiness</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.056
	Sig.(1-tailed)		.582
	N	100	100
<b>Forgiveness</b>	Pearson Correlation	.056	1
	Sig.(1-tailed)	.582	
	N	100	100

Table- 3 shows an overview of correlation of happiness and forgiveness among college students. Significant weak correlation was found between happiness and forgiveness.

## Discussion

The current study was conducted to measure the level of Control Happiness and Forgiveness among college students. The first objective of the study was to assess the level of

happiness in male and female students. The mean of males is obtained to be higher than that of females. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis i.e. there will be significant difference in the level of happiness in male and female among college students is accepted.

The second objective of the study was to assess the level of Forgiveness in male and female students among college students. On the dimension of forgiveness i.e. forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others and forgiveness of situation significant differences were found. In the total the mean of males is obtained to be higher than females. In the scores obtained on the scale of forgiveness the results were found to be significant between male and female. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis i.e. there will be a significant difference in the level of forgiveness in male and female students among college students is accepted.

The third objective of the study was to assess the relationship between Happiness and Forgiveness among college students. The scores obtained in both the scales shows that there is weak correlation between Happiness and Forgiveness. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis i.e. there will be a significant relationship between Happiness and Forgiveness is rejected. The studies which support our hypothesis are:-

A study was carried on a sample of 237 adolescents with the aim of finding out the relationship between emotional competence, forgiveness and happiness. The result indicated a positive correlation between emotional competence and happiness. However no significant relationship was found between forgiveness and happiness. Gender differences were observed in happiness and four dimensions of emotional competence (Devassy & Raj, 2014). This study examined gratitude, forgiveness and subjective well being among college going students a sample of 219, the findings of indicated significant differences in boys and girls on the measure of gratitude and forgiveness. Girls scored higher on these two measures from which it can be inferred that they are more forgiving and having more gratitude than that of boys. However, significant gender difference was not found on the measure of subjective well being (Kirmani, 2015). Jiang (2014) examined how individual group status and happiness influence forgiveness. An interaction effect between happiness and group status on forgiveness was found, that is, highly happy people tended to be more forgiving. Happy participants tended to forgive more when in-group or out-group members were hurt; sad participants tended to forgive less when in-group members rather than out-group members were hurt.

### Conclusion

The present study found that there was a significant difference in Happiness and Forgiveness across gender and weak correlation was found between Happiness and forgiveness.

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