Happiness: Is it Prevalent amongst Students of Higher Educational Institutions?

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Abstract--- The present research contributes to assessing happiness level of students of higher Educational Institutions through statistical analysis of factors such as academic years and gender, and proposing a model for 'skills to remain happy'. The study aims to expand the domain towards the well-being of future employees which ultimately leads to organizational effectiveness. The paper is based on an exploratory study using the survey approach through questionnaire. The sample size is 402 students from three academic years of Higher Educational Institution. The data has been complemented with documentary analysis, including behavioral science studies and research methods used therein. The paper provides empirical insights on the prevailing happiness level amongst University students. It provides an insight for future research dealing with questions like "Can Happiness be induced, taught or altered", and if yes, for how long, and its overall effect on organizational effectiveness. The paper includes inferences for the organization's psychological contract with its employees and will thus be able to take care of the wellbeing of the employees, resulting in happiness. This may lead to compatible bond between employees and organization culminating in a better in-out ratio and increased level of trust and stability. This paper suffices recognized need to study how happiness can enhance organizational effectiveness.

Keywords--- Happiness, Well-being, Psychological Contract, Organizational Effectiveness.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sheldon and Lucas (2014) found that a person's happiness has a set point governed by genes and nurture. Individual facing high or low level of happiness tends to come back to this set point after certain period of time. The individual's actual happiness level remains same throughout the life. Hence happiness is a short term feeling. People's happiness is governed by genes and life experiences. In contrast to this it was also found that high heritability does not limit chances for raising happiness (Nes, 2010).

Past researches (Cheng and Furnham, 2002) with college students found various factors influencing their happiness for example- happiness was found to be related to personality traits (EPQ), self-confidence (PEI), friendship and school grades also some more like enjoying the work and getting success, being healthy in childhood, liked by others, succeeding in dealing with people, marriage, love of nature, and very hard-working living (Watson, 1930). Social support from teachers also enhanced happiness significantly (Natvig, Albrektsen, & Qvarnstrom, 2003) and the use of social network by students of high school is also an important interpreter in making students happy (Dogan, 2016). Whereas various features of social life, moments spent with family and friends may have significant contribution. While working onto social networking site plus relationships, job prospects etc. may put affects on happiness. Remaining in past bad memories may decreases happiness of both male and female students. Several researchers (mozafarinia *et al.,* 2014, Rezvan *et al.,* 2006, and Xiao, 2009) found factors such as

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compatibility to individuals' teamwork, self-confidence, friendship, cognitive, emotional and behavior aspects, metacognition, academic achievement, life satisfaction, financial satisfaction, academic satisfaction and financial behavior influenced individual's happiness. (Demir & Özdemir, 2010) found happiness associated with perceived autonomy support in friendships. Vaidya (2014) found significant positive correlation between extraversion and happiness where as weak correlation was found between Happiness and forgiveness (Shekhar, Jamwal, & Sharma, n.d.). (Piqueras, Kuhne, Vera-Villarroel, van Straten, &Cuijpers, 2011) found self-reporting daily physical activity, having lunch and fruits and vegetables each day had a higher relation with happiness.

Various factors like better social circle, better personal expertise, and satisfactory sleep, no consumption of tobacco, cigarettes, alcohol and having breakfast daily can also be associated with happiness. Some more factors like physical exercise, eating habits, and sleep regularities, mood states, perceived stress, time management, social support, spiritual or religious habits, gender, age may are related. Happiness has its deep roots to Maslow's levels of need and is perceived to be most important for happiness (Pettijohn & Pettijohn, 1996). More over autonomy, emerging adulthood (O'Donnell and Susan L.; Chang and Kelly B.; Miller, 2013) were also affecting happiness.

As well as Booth and Bartlett, 1992 found inverse relationships between happiness and shyness, happiness and loneliness, and a positive relationship was found between loneliness and shyness. An increasing degree of stress experience reduced the feeling of happiness significantly (Natvig et al., 2003). Happiness and psychological issue such as stress, anxiety and depression may also have important effect. Vaidya (2014) also found significant negative correlation between honesty and happiness. Finances and daily transport may also have effect on happiness. External life circumstances had surprisingly small effect on happiness (Lucas, 2007) and various feelings such as proud about the self, excited always, good feeling, sociable, plus remaining in the state for flow experience can also play role in happiness. Happiness is found useful in promoting emotional intelligence in both males and females (Khosla and Dokania, 2010). It was also found that religious people are happier (Ahmed and Abdel, 2006).

Present study will serve as a platform to find out the various techniques to alter happiness and stretch it for longer durations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Happiness is found to be the conclusive goal of one's aliveness and can be explained as a feeling of pleasure and positivity. Mandel (2018) quoting Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Prize winner defined happiness as "*what I experience here and now*". When someone feels good, relieved or satisfied about something, that person is said to be "happy". Happiness can also be defined as *"overall appreciation of one's life as-a-whole"* (Veenhoven, 2012). Happy feeling helps people to relax and smile and be more productive. Happiness is usually thought of as the opposite of sadness. But this is arguable as we can't say that in absence of happiness one is sad. Happiness can also be considered as a feeling of completeness, joyfulness, well-being, and contentment. When people are secure, successful, and healthy, they feel happy, or vice versa we can say happier people are more successful, feel lucky and safe. The reasons for happiness differ from person to person.

Happiness has also been applied in the reference of mental and emotional conditions, bearing positive or pleasant feelings and emotions that can range from completeness to intense joyful states. It has also seen in the alignment of

life- satisfaction, contentedness, subjective well-being, pleasure, eudemonia, bliss, flourishing, cheerfulness, care freeness. Workplace happiness since ages has been observed as a prospective substance of distinguish development at work, fairly than a process to business growth. Balancing an appropriate level of happiness at work has now become largely relevant plus significant because of its magnification of duties driven by uncertain market environment and increased competitors. Now a day, professionals and scholars are observing happiness as one of the major origins of constructive results at workplace. In point of fact, workplaces having elevated than average happiness for its employee show improved performance and customer satisfaction. In such scenario, companies feel important to generate and balance positive work environment which will lead to the happiness of its employees.

Sensual pleasures and money need not directly contribute happiness; rather such factors may have influence on the well-being of an employee in the work setup. Further, substantial findings has indicated that autonomy along with freedom in the work spaces have contributed utmost on the happiness level of employees, further some more impacting factors are knowledge acquiring capacity and the skill to motivating the self's efficiency and style.

III. METHODOLOGY

A total of 402 UG students of private university were taken for the study on Happiness. Convenience sampling design was adapted. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was used as research instrument to find out the level of happiness, comprising of 29 questions based on uniform six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Ethical Consent

Verbal consent was taken from students before taking the survey and 8 student's survey was not included as they were distracted by external factors such as hunger, cold weather, and not in mood fully to attend the survey. The breakup of students as per the academic year is as follows:

(Fig 1) First year: 159

Second year: 134

Third year: 109

Male students: 152
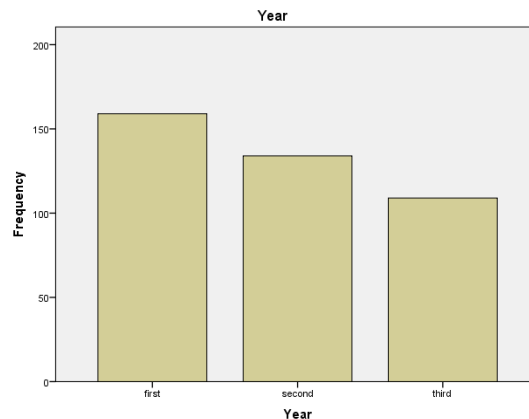
Female students: 250

Figure 1: Number of Students in different Years

The number of male students: 152 and that of female students: 250

Objectives

Key objectives for the research are to:

- Assess the level of happiness in college students.

- Compare the happiness level of male and female students.

- Find out the difference of happiness level in different academic years.

- Hypothesis:

- Following two hypotheses were formulated.

Hypothesis 1:

- Null hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the happiness level of males and females students.

- Alternate hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference between the happiness level of males and female students.

Hypothesis 2:

- Null hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference for the happiness levels in different academic years.

- Alternate hypothesis 2: There is a significance difference for the happiness levels in different academic years.

Interpretation

The first objective was to assess the level of happiness in college students. College students are greatly affected by various factors that influence their happiness. Some factors that are positively related to happiness are - Social support from teachers (Natvig et al., 2003), social network usage (Dogan, 2016), extraversion (Vaidya, 2014), daily physical activity, having lunch and fruits and vegetables (Piqueras et al., 2011). SPSS was used to statistically analyze the results. SPSS reflects (Table 1) minimum mean score (2.44) and maximum mean score (5.55) and mean score (4.11) depicting that overall happiness level of students' is slightly below average as shown in figure 2 also. As result shows slightly below average happiness score, students may be affected by factors that are negatively related to happiness such as shyness and loneliness (Booth and Bartlett, 1992), etc.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Average Happiness Score

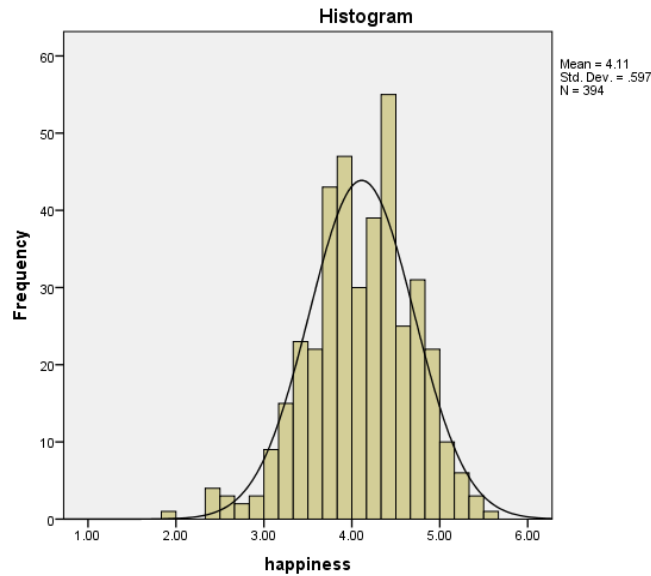|	*N*	*Minimum score*	*Maximum score*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*Variance*
HAPPINESS	394	1.93	5.55	4.1122	0.59695	0.356
VALID N	394					

Figure 2: Average Happiness Score

Second objective talks about comparing the happiness level of male and female students. Figure 3 shows the total male students are 147 and females are 247.
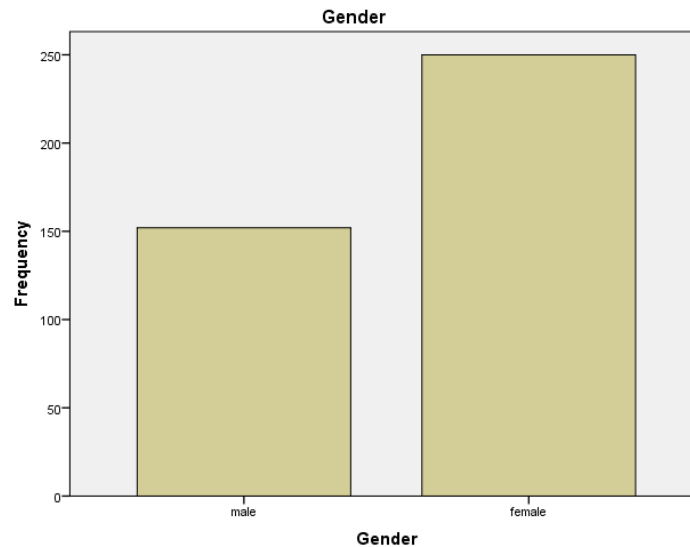

Figure 3: Number of Male and Female Students

The mean score of happiness for males came out to be 4.12 (figure 4) and 4.10 for females (figure 5) and is shown in Table 2 statistically. To compare the Happiness score between genders, Independent sample t test is used with 95% confidence level. The Independent t test reveals that the significance is 0.497 (Table 3) which is very high in comparison to 0.05 significance level. So the null hypothesis is accepted, thereby stating that, there is no significant difference between- the level of happiness of male and female students. In present research, by analyzing the data statistically through SPSS, it is found that, there is no significant difference of happiness index between male and female students which depicts that gender does not affect the happiness index.
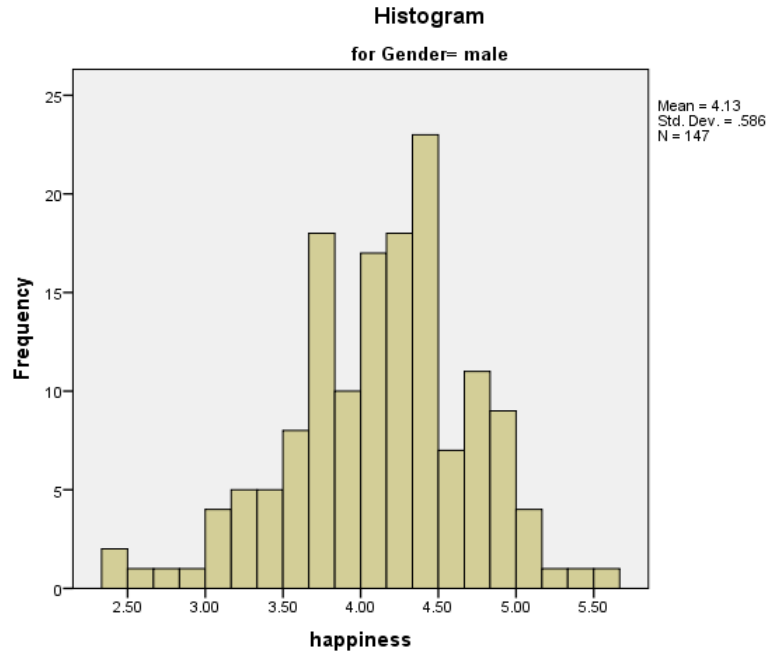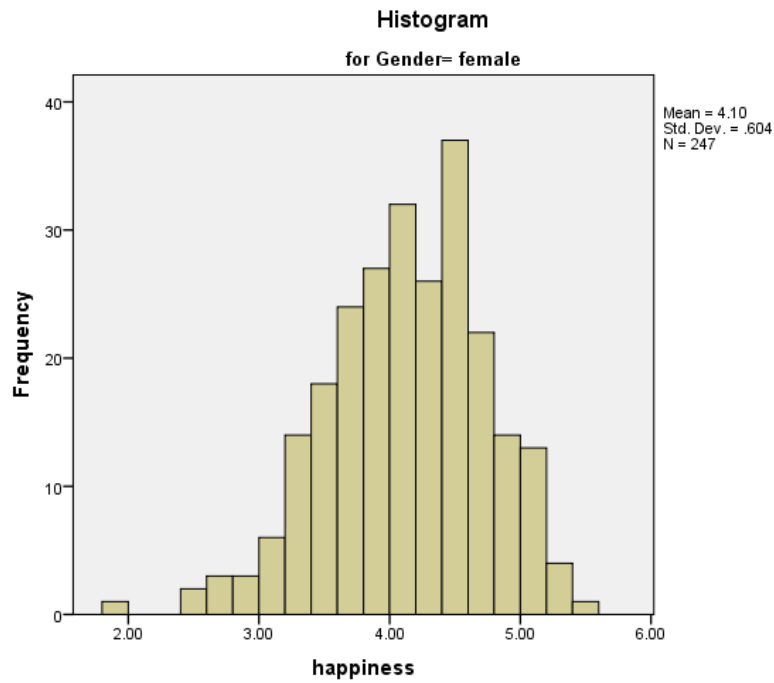
Figure 4: Happiness Level of Male Students

Figure 5: Happiness Score of Female Students

Table 2: Group Statistics for Gender and Happiness

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
HAPPINESS	Male	147	4.1267	0.58640	0.04837
	Female	247	4.1035	0.60417	0.03844

Table 3: Independent t Test Results

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
HAPPINESS	Equal variances assumed	0.461	0.497	0.374	0.392	0.709	0.02325	0.06225	0.09914	0.14564
	Equal variances not assumed			0.376	314.296	0.707	0.02325	0.06178	0.09831	0.14481

Third objective was to find out the difference in happiness level in the students of different academic years. Person's happiness has a set point governed by genes and nurture (Sheldon and Lucas, 2014) and it is also found that individual's actual happiness level remains same throughout the life. One-way analysis of variance was run to assess the null hypothesis that- there is no significant difference between the happiness level with college students of different years (*N*=402). The independent variable, year, included three groups: First year students (Mean= 4.11, Std. Deviation= 0.60, n= 153) as in figure 6, Second year students (Mean= 4.07, Std. deviation=0.57, n= 132) shown in figure 7, Third year students (Mean=4.15, Std. Deviation= 0.60, n= 109) as in figure 8 and table 4 also shows descriptions for these. The result of ANOVA was insignificant (Table 5), $F= (2,391) = 0.57$, $p = 0.56$. Therefore there is no significant evidence to reject null hypothesis so it is concluded that, there is no significant difference found in level of happiness for different academic years though figure no 9 depicts a dip in the level of happiness of 2nd year students. The present findings can be used for further research to find out how the happiness level of the students can be increased as they grow academically.
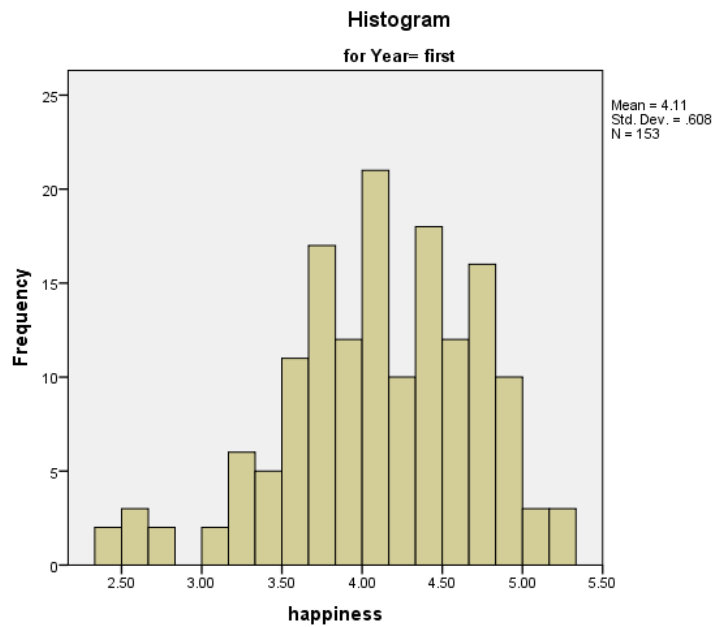

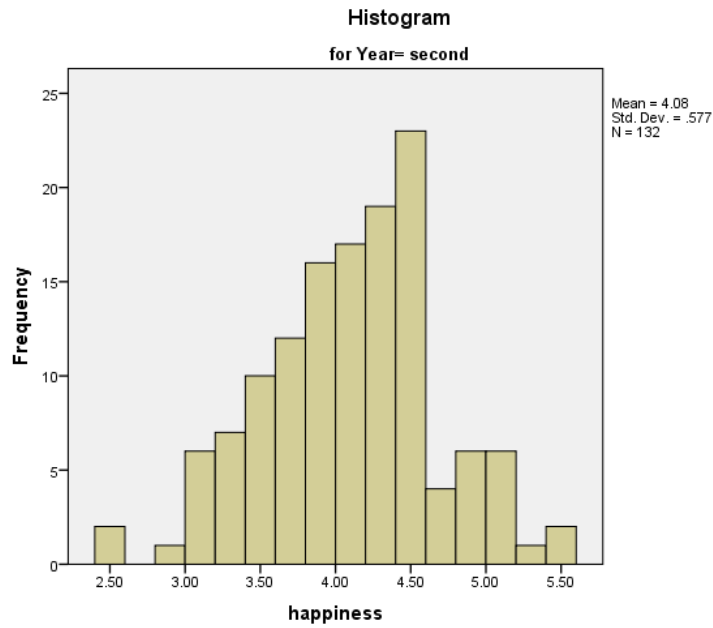Figure 6: Happiness Score of First Year Students
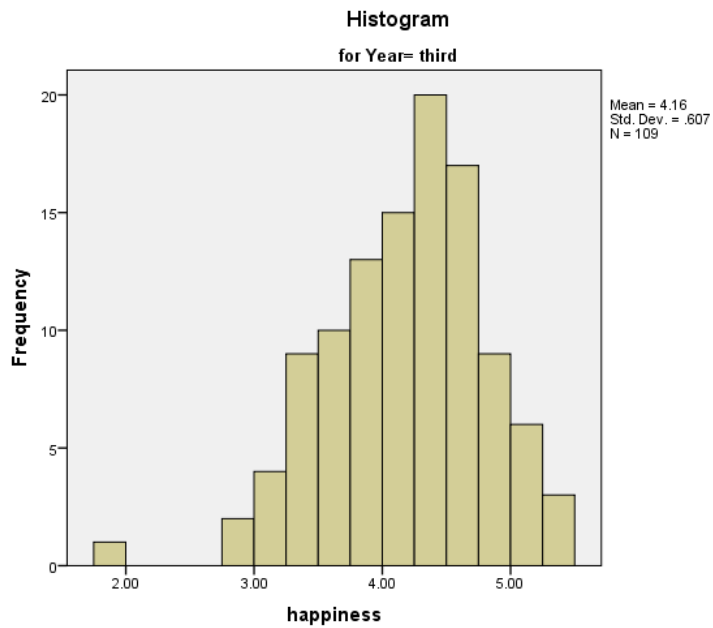
Figure 7: Happiness Score of Second Year Students

Figure 8: Happiness Score of Third Year Students

Table 5: One-way ANOVA Results

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence interval for Mean Lower Boundary	95% Confidence interval for Mean Upper Boundary	Minimum	Maximum
First Year	153	4.1115	0.060840	0.04919	4.0143	4.2087	2.48	5.25
Second Year	132	4.0752	0.57722	0.5024	3.9758	4.1746	2.44	5.55
Third Year	109	4.1578	0.60652	0.05809	4.0426	4.2730	1.93	5.44
TOTAL	394	4.1122	0.59695	0.03007	4.0530	4.1713	1.93	5.55

Table 4: Descriptive for Happiness and Academic Growth years of Students

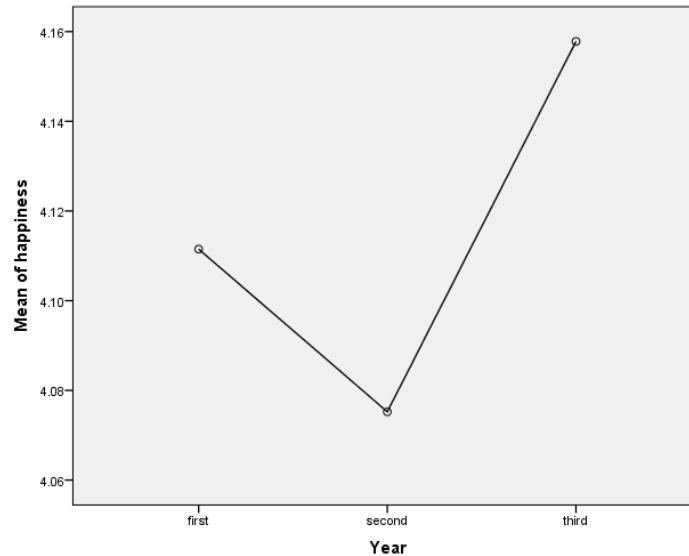| HAPPINESS	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.407	2	0.204	0.570	0.566
Within Groups	139.640	391	0.357		
TOTAL	140.047	393			

Figure 9: Comparison of mean of Happiness Score among different Academic Years

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the research was to find out the happiness level of the students as it directly affects their future performance. It is seen that students get easily happy when exposed to new opportunities and get bored easily too if college becomes routine. When verbally asked, students gave more negative answers for their happiness level. They were found stating various external factors causing decrease in happiness level. They mentioned external factors like attending college daily, canteen food, work pressure, peer pressure, relationships, distance to commute from home to college; their looks etc. contribute to their low level of happiness. Few students were found to be saying that they even don't know the reason of low happiness. So present study focused on finding out the happiness level of the students.

It was further observed that male students have comparatively higher happiness level than female students based on their average score though it has not been proved statically. Females tend to be more sincere, dedicated, disciplined. They share their feelings more often than males. It is seen that female students are more responsible towards their workload. On the other hand males too are highly energetic, active, determined and hardworking. Both were highly influenced by friends, new relationships, opportunities. Various factors that may affect their happiness level include their travel time, daily exercises, fruits and vegetable intake, peer pressure. Both of them are affected by the financial issues greatly. In college, shyness and loneliness may also impact happiness. In present research, by analyzing the data statistically through SPSS, it was found that-there is no significant difference between the index of happiness of male and female students which reflects that gender does not affect the happiness index.

It is usually seen that when students get admission, their happiness level is high as they have achieved their target of coming to certain college. First year students get extra attention. They remain happy because of various fascinating factors like new friends, college life, free exposure, their dream stream, feeling of independence, etc. New subjects attract them, they tend to pay attention to classes and they take lot of efforts to make their class image and their presence to faculty. They participate in all possible extra-curricular activities. Their energy level remains high. Students tend to do their submissions within deadline and with great dedication.

While reaching second year, students get adjusted to the system and start feeling little bored, with the same routine of life. While towards the final year, students again become active. Various reasons could be becoming most senior, mature with time, building strong friendships, being busy with trainings, hoping to get placed, etc. Though the Results of the study show that there is no significant difference for the happiness level of the different academic years.

V. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Now a day, organizations are very keen about its employee's happiness and well-being. Salary, perks, bonuses, promotion etc. make employees temporarily happy. What costs for little longer happiness? For this, moving a step back will help to find out key factors influencing happiness. This research paper focuses on happiness of higher educational institute's students as they are future budding professionals.

The findings of the present study show that college student are not very happy, thereby raising the concern to find out reasons for low happiness level and re-establish the fact that gender does not affect happiness. Further results concluded that happiness does not change with time. The findings reflect that individual's happiness set point remains same when observed for longer time span, may be as driven by genes. The results force us to think about the factors contributing to less happiness of students and also compel us to think that if at this young, energetic, care free age students are not very happy, how they will cope with the future demands of the work place. This also raises the concern on their future happiness level. This research will further be used to build up model for "Skills to remain Happy" which can be used as an empowerment tool to create happiness amongst students.

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