

Does Happiness Promote Emotional Intelligence?

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The study examined the influence of happiness on experienced affect, emotion regulation and emotional intelligence. Happy (n=100) and unhappy (n=100) participants (mean age= 21 years) completed measures assessing affect (PANAS-R) and emotional intelligence (WLEIS) and emotion regulation strategies (ERQ). A 2x2 (gender x group) ANOVA revealed that happy participants as compared to unhappy participants reported significantly greater positive affect and emotional intelligence. Happy as compared to unhappy men had significantly greater emotional intelligence while happy women were found to be more emotionally intelligent than unhappy women. There were significant group and gender differences in the use of reappraisal strategies but not suppression strategies. The findings reveal the significance of happiness in promoting emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Happiness, Affect, Emotional intelligence

Happiness is maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain to achieve life satisfaction according to the doctrine of hedonism. However, notion of eudemonia suggests that true happiness entails identifying one's virtues, cultivating them, and living in accordance with them. It has been proposed that those who pursue eudemonic goals and activities are more satisfied than those who pursue pleasure. Though, hedonism contributes less to long-term happiness than doe's eudemonia. One does not need to choose between the two as both orientations can characterize happiness. People need at least one route to happiness in order to be satisfied. Seligman (2002) pointed out that even if we are below average on positive affectivity, we could still appreciate life as a good one.

Theories of Happiness

Hedonism holds that happiness entails raw feelings front and center in our conscious experiences. A happy life is one in which good feelings (pleasure) are maximized, and the bad feelings (pain) are minimized. Hence happiness is the sum over the life time of all

these specific feelings (Kahneman, 1999). Desire theory holds that happiness is a matter of getting what you want, whether or not it involves pleasure (Griffin, 1986).

Objective list theory suggests that there are (Nussbaum, 1992) truly valuable things in this world, happiness entails achieving same number of these; e.g., friendship, education, children, etc., to ascertain whether truly valuable things have been entailed by an individual.

Emotional Intelligence

Over the past decade there has been a growing interest in emotional intelligence (EI). EI represents the ability to perceive, appraise, and express emotions accurately and adaptively. The ability to access and / or generate feelings when they facilitate cognitive activities and adaptive action; and the ability to regulate emotions in oneself and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Hence, EI refers to the ability process emotion – laden information competently, to use it to guide various cognitive activities. EI could be an important predictor of success in personal relations,

family functioning and workplace.

Law, Wong & Song (2004) used the four dimensional definition of EI developed by Davies, Robert & Stankov (1998). These 4 dimensions are as follows: 1) Appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself: This related to an individual's ability to understand his or her deep emotions, and to be able to express emotions naturally. People who have good ability in this area will sense and acknowledge their emotions better than most people. 2) Appraisal and recognition of emotions in others. This relates to an individuals ability to perceive and understand the emotions of the people around them. People who rate highly in this ability will be very sensitive to the emotions of others as well as be able to predict other's emotional responses. 3) Regulation of emotion in oneself. This relates to the ability of a person to regulate his or her emotions, enabling a more rapid recovery from psychological distress. A person with high ability in this area would be able to return quickly to normal psychological states after rejoicing or being upset. Such a person would also have better control of his or her emotions and would be less likely to lose his or her temper. 4) Use of emotions to facilitate performance. This relates to the ability of a person to make use of his or her emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance. A person who is highly capable in this dimension would be able to encourage him or herself to do better continuously. He or she would be able to direct his or her emotions in positive and productive directions.

Law, Wong, & Song (2004) suggest that EI consists of a set of abilities that a person uses to understand, regulate, and make use of his or her emotions. Emotional understanding, regulation, and utilization reflect the capability of a person to manage his or her emotions. Some people have a higher competence than others to do so. Wong & Law (2002) showed empirically that the

dimensions of EI were moderately correlated among them. Intrapersonal emotional recognition and management helps an individual deal with his or her emotions. A person with high EI should be able to recognize his or her emotions, to regulate those emotions, and to use them to facilitate performance. As a result this individual should be happier as a whole in life. Several studies have provided evidence of this positive relation (e.g., Wong & Law, 2002). We were interested in the reverse phenomenon. That is if happy people were more emotionally intelligent?

A person with high EI would be less affected by his or her emotions is able to direct emotions in a positive direction, and have lower chances of feeling depressed. An individual with high EI would also be able to interpret other's moods correctly and therefore have a higher chance of forming close relation and getting social support in general. As a result, this individual should be less likely to feel powerless. There is evidence in literature that feelings of powerlessness are related to negative emotion such as sadness and fear (e.g., Roseman, Dhawan, Retlek, & Naidu, 1995).

Understanding and regulation of one's emotions as well as understanding of other's emotions are the core factors affecting intrapersonal well-being and interpersonal relations. In a negative sense, an individual who is not sensitive to his or her own emotions and who is unable to regulate his or her emotions would have problems interacting with others. On the positive side, the use of the emotions dimension of EI describes one's ability to direct emotions to performance. A person with high EI would be able to direct positive emotions to high performance and redirect negative emotions to generate constructive performance goals. Mayer, Caruso & Salovey (1997) suggest that using the emotion as one basis for thinking, and thinking with emotions themselves, may be related to important social competencies and

adaptive behavior. Is it possible that happiness can enhance EI if it's ability?

This has important implications, as one's understanding of one's and others affective ratings as a result of one's EI would influence self- other rating agreements, which, in turn would influence performance outcomes.

This study proposes to understand the effects of happiness on emotional intelligence due to its personal importance and social implications on perceived health and quality of life. It is argued that emotions as joy, fear, happiness can occur without complex cognitive processes as a result of unconscious processing (Zajonc, 1992) while Lazarus & Lazarus (2000) and Diener (2009) signify the importance of cognitive reappraisals in determining emotions.

Happiness is determined by various affective processes such as affect (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005); emotional intelligence (Austin, Saklofske & Egan, 2005); emotion regulation (Khosla, 2005). Also cognitive processes as life satisfaction (Khosla, 2005); self esteem and efficacy (Lyubomirsky & Tucker, 1998); and event construal (Gupta & Khosla, 2006).

Thus the study proposes to investigate whether happiness as a construct contributes to them or whether a reciprocal relation exists or not, unlike what Seligman (2002) proposed. This is the uniqueness of the study. How happy and unhappy people vary significantly on their use of particular emotion regulation strategies, then, do they imply important implications for happiness? Research reveals that women as compared to men experience more negative emotions (Khosla, 2006), more unpleasant affect (Khosla, 2001); depression (Khosla & Kapur, 2007-08) are not satisfied with life, unhealthy. Women who report happiness do so to conform to the social norms, but this explanation makes it difficult to account for women's self reported happiness. Diener (2009) report that to the extent that people with high need of approval report happiness are

actually happy. This study intends to examine gender differences to find the paradoxical presence of both; the greater prevalence of negative affect and equal or greater overall happiness reported by women and men. The study intends to focus on college students as college is the age of transition and there are anxieties about many psycho social factors at this stage like the growing competition in education, exam stress, career, results, relations etc, lack of satisfaction in important life domains, restlessness so there is rising unhappiness among the youth. In a study 50% of the participants reported experiencing major depression by the age 25, alarming number of college students either commits suicide or have high levels of depression (Beck, 1967). The study is very important because it aims to explore in detail how happiness influences affective evaluation processes among happy and unhappy men and women. A happy person contributes happiness to society that leads to a happy progressive nation.

The Objectives of this study were to assess the Affective Processes among happy and unhappy participants. It was predicted that happy as compared to unhappy participants will vary in their affective processes, such as experienced affect, emotional intelligence; and emotion regulation strategies. Gender differences will also be apparent.

Method

Participants:

208 graduate students from Delhi University participated in the study. Their age ranged between 18 to 24 years (mean age=21 years). They were well conversant in English and Hindi languages, non-working, unmarried and middle socio economic status, without any history of clinical disorders, normal, or corrected eyesight. Participants were then classified on the basis of their responses on Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), administered in the beginning of the study. Each item was answered on a 7-point scale. The items asked

the respondents to characterize themselves using both absolute ratings and ratings relative to peers and descriptions of happy and unhappy people. Responses to the 4-items were combined and arranged to provide a single SHS composite score ranging from 1 to 7.0. The scale shows good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.80$), excellent validity and test-retest reliability (Lyubomirsky, 2001). Of the 208 participants, those 100 participants with combined score in the center quartile distribution (median=5.5) were classified as happy ($M=6.11$, $SD=0.5$) and the remaining 100 participants were classified as unhappy ($M=4.27$, $SD=0.93$). The current ratings of the unhappy participants meant that they were unhappy relative not only to their own self-labeled unhappy state but also relative to their peers in the perpetuation as a whole. 8 subjects whose responses were incomplete were rejected from participation in the study. In order to see whether the selected two groups varied significantly, a 2 X 2 ANOVA showed that the two groups selected were significantly different from one another [$F(1,196) = 330.35$, $p < 0.01$].

Design:

A 2 X 2 factorial design was used with a between-subjects comparison of Gender X Groups (men and women X happy and unhappy) and a within-subject comparison of affect, emotion regulation and emotional intelligence.

Measures:

Affect: Affect was assessed using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule-Revised (PANAS-R; Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). This self-report schedule includes 7-items, 3 for Positive Affect (PA: the extent to which a person feels jovial, self-awareness and attentive) and 4 for Negative Affect (NA: the extent to which a person experiences guilt, fear, hostility and sadness). Each item is rated on a scale from 1 to 5 (1=very slightly, 5=extremely). Thus scores for PA may range from 3 to 15 and for NA 4 to 20. The participants

were required to indicate the extent to which each item corresponded to the ways they felt over the 2-week period prior to the measurement. As such, the PANAS-R served as a measure of recent affective experience and has low social desirability (Diener, Sandvik, Pivov & Gallagher, 1991).

Emotional intelligence: EI was assessed using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS; Wong & Law, 2002) following the 4-dimensional definition of EI as introduced by Davies et al., (1998). Wong and Law used both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (CFAs) in the scale development and validation process to show that EI as measured by WLEIS, was distinct but correlated with from the Big Five personality dimensions. It is a 16-item scale divided in 4 subscales; self-emotion appraisal (e.g., I really understand what I feel.), others-emotion appraisal (e.g. I am a good observer of others' emotions), use of emotion (e.g. am a self-motivating person) and regulation of emotion (e.g. have good control of my emotions). Each item is rated on a scale from 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) and the scores may range from 16 to 80. The scale has desirable psychometric properties, low social desirability, ability to adaptively identify, understand, and manage emotions in self and others.

Emotion Regulation: Emotion Regulation Questionnaire: It is a 10-item questionnaire (Gross & John, 1998) used to assess the emotion regulation strategy on 2 subscales i.e., reappraisal (6-items) (e.g., I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation) and suppression (4-items) (e.g. keep my emotions to myself.) on a scale from 1 to 7 (1=strongly agree, 7=strongly disagree) and the scores may range from 10 to 70. For each of these items participants rated separately the degree to which they had used this strategy to regulate positive or negative emotions over the previous two weeks.

Results

A 2X2 ANOVA (Table1) reveals that no significant gender differences were obtained with respect to experienced PA among men and women [$F(1,196)=1.92, ns$]. However, significant difference were obtained between the groups [$F(1,196)=23.53, p<0.01$], indicating that happy participants experienced significantly more PA ($M=11.34, SD=2.31$) as compared to unhappy participants ($M=9.98, SD=5.06$). The AB interaction effects were also found to be significant [$F(1,196)=4.33, p<0.05$], indicating that happy women experienced significantly more PA ($M=11.44,$

$SD=1.93$) than happy men ($M=11.24, SD=2.69$), while unhappy men experienced significantly more PA ($M=10.46, SD=2.64$) than unhappy women ($M=9.48, SD=2.42$) (fig.1)

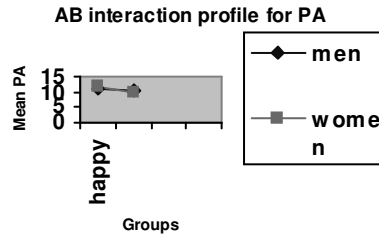


Figure 1

Table 1: Summary for 2x2 ANOVA for Happy and Unhappy Men and Women on Affect, Emotional Intelligence and Emotion Regulation Strategies

Variable	Factor A (Gender)		Factor B (Group)		Interaction Factors AB	
	Ms	F	Ms	F	Ms	F
Positive Affect	7.5	1.92	93.9	23.53**	17.3	4.33*
Negative Affect	128	64000**	.04	20**	141.1	70550**
Emotional Intelligence	832.34	9.68**	364.49	4.23*	30.41	<1
Reappraisal strategy	109.52	4.19*	388.04	14.86**	15.66	<1
Suppression strategy	8	<1	.09	<1	118.61	3.83

* $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$

A 2X2 ANOVA was done across factor A (Gender) and factor B (Group) on experienced negative affect revealed significant gender differences with respect to experienced negative affect among men and women [$F(1,196)=64000, p<0.01$]. In level B, significant difference were obtained between the groups [$F(1,196)=20, p<0.01$], indicating that happy participants experienced significantly more negative affect ($M=11.34, SD=2.31$) as compared to unhappy participants. ($M=9.98, SD=5.06$)(table2). Happy men also experienced higher positive affect($M=11.24, SD=2.69$) than negative affect ($M=9.5, SD=4.9$), ($t(49)=2.51, p<0.01$), happy women also felt significantly more positive affect ($M=11.44, SD=1.93$) than negative affect ($M=6.22, SD=3$), ($t(49)=1.91, p<0.05$). Overall happy participants felt more positive affect ($M=11.34, SD=2.31$) than negative affect

($M=7.86, SD=3.95$), ($t(99)=1.85, p<0.05$). Unhappy men also experienced higher positive affect ($M=10.46, SD=2.64$) than negative affect ($M=7.84, SD=3.26$), ($t(49)=2.61, p<0.01$), while unhappy women showed no significant difference i.e., positive affect ($M=9.48, SD=2.42$), negative affect ($M=7.92, SD=6.2$), ($t(49)=1.91, ns$). Overall unhappy participants felt more positive affect ($M=9.97, SD=2.53$) than negative affect ($M=7.88, SD=2.93$), ($t(99)=2.34, p<0.01$).

As seen in Figure 2, the AB interaction effects were also found to be significant [$F(1,196)=70550, p<0.01$], indicating that happy men experienced significantly more negative affect($M=9.5, SD=4.9$) than happy women ($M=6.22, SD=3$), while unhappy men experienced significantly more NA ($M=7.84, SD=3.26$) than unhappy women ($M=7.92, SD=2.60$)

As seen in Fig. 2 the AB interaction effects were also found to be significant [$F(1,196) = 70550, p < 0.01$], indicating that happy men experienced significantly more negative affect ($M=9.5, SD=4.9$) than happy women ($M=6.22, SD=3$), while unhappy men experienced significantly more NA ($M=7.84, SD=3.26$) than unhappy women ($M=7.92, SD=2.60$) (Fig.2)

A 2X2 ANOVA done across factor A (Gender) and factor B (Group) for scores on emotional intelligence showed significant gender differences with respect to emotional intelligence among men and women [$F(1,196)=9.68, p < 0.01$]. In level B, significant difference were obtained between the groups [$F(1,196) = 4.23, p < 0.05$], indicating that happy

participants have significantly more EI ($M=61.1, SD=12.22$) as compared to unhappy participants ($M=57.85, SD=10.26$). The AB interaction effects were found to be non-significant.

There were significant gender differences with respect to Self Appraisal of Emotions in the level of emotional intelligence among men and women [$F(1,196) = 4.43, p < 0.05$], in level B, significant difference were obtained between the groups [$F(1,196) = 4.34, p < 0.05$] on regulation of emotions. As in *fig3*: it is evident that happy women regulate their emotions more than happy men and unhappy women more than unhappy men.

Table 2: Mean, SD and t-values for Happy and Unhappy Men and Women on Experienced Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA)

	Happy (n=100)			Unhappy (n=100)		
	PA	NA	t(df=49)	PA	NA	t(df=49)
Men (n=50)	11.24 (2.69)	9.5 (4.9)	2.51**	10.46 (2.64)	7.84 (3.26)	2.61**
Women (n=50)	11.44 (1.93)	6.22 (3)		1.91*	9.48 (2.42)	
			t(df=99)			t(df=99)
combined (n=100)	11.34 (2.31)	7.86 (3.95)	1.85*	9.97 (2.53)	7.88 (2.93)	2.34**

Table 3: Mean, SD for Happy and Unhappy Men and Women on Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Subscales of EI

	Happy			Unhappy		
	Men (n=50)	Women (n=50)	Combined (n=100)	Men (n=50)	Women (n=50)	combined (n=100)
Total EI	60(14.13)	62.2(10.31)	61.1(12.22)	55.4(14.53)	60.3(6)	57.85(10.26)
SAE	14.46(4.10)	15.42(3.43)	14.94(3.76)	14.3(4.10)	15.36(2.79)	14.83(3.44)
OAE	15.4(4.51)	15.6(3.16)	15.5(3.83)	14.74(3.99)	16.2(2.51)	15.47(3.25)
UOE	15.1(4.32)	15.74(3.40)	15.42(3.86)	13.92(4.06)	15.2(1.94)	14.56(3)
ROE	13.9(4.09)	14.8(3.5)	14.35(3.79)	13.24(3.7)	13.5(3.3)	13.37(3.5)

Table 4: Mean, SD and t-values on Emotion Regulation Scales for Happy and Unhappy Men and Women

	Happy			Unhappy		
	Men (n=50)	Women (n=50)	Combined (n=100)	Men (n=50)	Women (n=50)	combined (n=100)
R	17.84(8.58)	19.88(4.81)	18.86(6.69)	21(6.33)	21.92(8.29)	21.46(7.31)
S	16.9(6.73)	14.96(5.53)	15.93(6.13)	15.32(4.91)	16.46(4.04)	15.89(4.47)

(R – Reappraisal, S – Suppression)

It deals with the analysis of the emotion regulation strategies used by happy and unhappy men and women. In order to see whether happy and unhappy participants both men and women varied significantly on emotion regulation strategies, 2X2 ANOVA was done across factor A (gender) and factor B (Group) Reappraisal Strategy. The summary of 2X2 ANOVA presented in Table 1 shows significant differences on level A i.e., happy participants used less reappraisal strategy ($M=18.86$, $SD=6.69$) than unhappy participants ($M=21.46$, $SD=7.31$) [$F(1,196)=4.19$, $p<0.05$] and significant differences on level B [$F(1,196)=14.86$, $p<0.01$]. However the interaction effects are non-significant. No significant differences were obtained on level A [$F(1,196)=<1$, ns] and level B [$F(1,196)=<1$, ns]. Moreover the Interaction Effects were also non significant with respect to using Suppression Strategy for emotion regulation among happy and unhappy men and women.

Discussion

There were significant variations in affective process among happy and unhappy participants with respect to experienced affect, emotional intelligence and use of emotion regulation strategies.

Affect: As hypothesized happy participants experienced significantly higher positive affect and lower negative affect while unhappy participants experienced significantly higher negative affect i.e., reporting lower levels of joviality, self assurance and attentiveness and high level of sadness, fearfulness, guilty. Intense prolonged negative affect without compensatory positive affect may overwhelm the regulatory functions of emotions and may result in unhappiness.

The broaden -and -build theory of positive emotions explains the heightened experienced positive affect among happy individuals, increased scope of attention, cognition, action and physical, intellectual, social resources (Fredrickson, 2000), creating an unusually flexible thought pattern, integrating and

opening broader behavioral options. Unhappy individuals focus on their negative feelings as they continuously search for the ways to control personal the environmental distress, resulting in high levels of negative affect. Thus it can be said that high experience of negative emotions is a result of attention narrowing, perhaps limiting their access to specific negative events and persistent thought about them even when they do not deserve. Mood Congruency (Bower, 1981) also explains this by stating that, the emotions –memory network is responsible for reinforcing the experienced negative affect, in specific nodes. This shows that happy people are more emotional than unhappy people. As in this study they score higher on both positive affect and negative affect i.e., they respond more emotionally and intensely to any life situation.

Emotional Intelligence (EI): Happy participants had higher emotional intelligence than unhappy participants, thus confirming the second hypothesis which states that happy participants will show higher emotional intelligence than unhappy participants. Happy participants did not vary significantly from unhappy participants on appraisal of emotions of self and others and use of emotions. They displayed no higher ability to adaptively identify, understand, manage and harness emotions both in the self and others and to use emotion by directing them towards constructive activities, personal performance and facilitate processing of affective information in comparison to unhappy participants. However, happy participant regulated their emotions more effectively by displaying an increased ability of recovering more rapidly from psychological distress. Other findings have also found high emotional intelligence to be associated with greater happiness and better psychological functioning (Austin, Saklofske & Egan, 2005); lower depression, greater optimism and increase ability to repair moods (Schutte et al., 1990) more positive mood and high self esteem.

The link between high emotional intelligence and high happiness can be explained in terms of the abilities the high emotionally intelligent individuals have. The competency model (Goleman, 1998) suggests that individuals with high emotional intelligence have abilities to motivate self, persist in the face of frustration, control the impulse and delay gratification, regulate one's mood and keep distress from swamping the ability to think, to emphasize and to hope. Wong and Law (2002) found that individuals with high emotional intelligence should be able to recognize his or her emotions, regulate and use them to facilitate performance and happiness in life. The mix model or self report model (Bar-on, 1997) suggests that emotional intelligence is an array of capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures. It is possible that happy people are able to overcome their problems more easily being more emotionally intelligent than unhappy individuals. A person with high emotional intelligence would be less affected by his or her emotions, direct them in a positive direction and will show have lower chances of feeling depressed. It seems that happy participants as compared to unhappy participants are more emotionally intelligent due to their enhanced positive affect. They probably find it easy to categorize, organize and use and remember aspects of a problem and new information easily. The ability model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) suggests that individuals high on emotional intelligence have the ability to perceive, appraise, understand and regulate emotions for emotional and intellectual growth in self and others. They found that self-reported difficulty in describing and identifying one's emotions is associated with ambivalence about emotional expression as well as with more general depression, neuroticism and distress. However, in the present study happy individuals were found showing no significant difference on appraisal

of emotions in self and others and on use of these emotions.

Use of Reappraisal and Suppression Strategies to Regulate Emotions: Happy participants reported using significantly less reappraisal strategies in effective emotion regulation than unhappy participants, while no significant differences were obtained among the two groups on use of suppression strategy in emotion regulation. The unhappy participants use more reappraisal as a strategy to evaluate the situation in relation to their experienced negative mood state and perhaps fell in the vicious circle of negative mood state reinforcing negative cognitive strategies to evaluate the situation, which further promoted their unhappy state.

The previous research does not conform to the result of the present study. For instance Catanzaro & Mearns (1990), suggested that reappraisal is related to mood regulation expectancies positively and suppression negatively. Suppressors felt more negative emotion, increasing risk factor for depression symptoms (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987). Similarly Mayer & Salovey, (1997) found that frequent users of suppression have less understanding of their moods, view them less favorably and modify them less successfully. But disconfirming this it was also found by Gross and John (2003) that re-appraisers experience and express greater positive emotion and lesser negative emotions whereas suppressor experience and express lesser reappraisal. Re-appraisal unlike suppression is associated with better interpersonal functioning and enhanced sense of being.

Gender variations in affective, cognitive variables, perceived health and quality of life: Happy women as compared to men reported experiencing higher positive affect, lower negative affect, while unhappy men as compared to women reported experiencing higher positive affect and lower negative

affect. Findings from various researches reveal that young women as compared to men report greater happiness (Diener et al., 1999) and more positive affect. Men and women are equally likely to declare themselves “very happy” and “satisfied” with their lives. Diener and Larsen (1984) suggested that there was no gender difference between men and women in reported level of happiness. Significant gender differences were also obtained on emotional intelligence with happy men reporting low emotional intelligence and happy women reporting high emotional intelligence. There were also significant gender differences on regulation of emotions; happy women reported reappraising their emotions more effectively than men, while men use more suppression than women.

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Received: May 31, 2009
Accepted: August 16, 2009

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