Helping Attitudes and Personal Values as Predictors of Happiness among Young Adults

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Helping attitudes are the emotions, beliefs, and behaviors of an individual toward helping others in need and the welfare of other individuals. Such attitudes are formed based on the personal values an individual holds. Holding certain personal values and helping attitudes towards others can facilitate maintaining and increasing an individual's happiness. The present study aims to establish a relationship in which helping attitudes and personal values predict the level of happiness. The study includes a sample of young adults (N=100) from different educational institutes. Their age ranges from 18 to 25 years. The sample had been divided evenly between 2 groups: Males (N=50) and Females (N=50). The information was gathered using 3 self-report standardized questionnaires: the Helping Attitude Scale, the Personal Values Questionnaire (PVQ) and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ). Initially, data was analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient. It was found that there is a positive correlation among helping attitudes, personal values and happiness. From the correlation matrix, it was seen that only helping attitudes are significantly correlated with happiness. After computing multiple regression analysis, it was found that helping attitudes ($\beta = 0.152$) are a significant predictor of happiness among young adults whereas personal values ($\beta = 0.069$) are not a strong indicator of happiness.

Keywords: helping attitudes, personal values, happiness, young adults

Young adulthood, typically defined as the stage of life spanning from around the late teens to the mid-20s, marks a critical period of transition and development. This phase is characterized by a myriad of changes, including increased independence, exploration of identity and career paths,and the establishment of meaningful relationships.

Psychologically, young adulthood is often associated with the pursuit of autonomy and self-discovery, as individuals navigate through various life experiences and challenges. It is a time when individuals may grapple with existential questions, such as finding their purpose and place in the world, while also facing practical concerns like pursuing higher education, entering the workforce, or starting a family.

Overall, young adulthood serves as a pivotal stage in shaping one's future trajectory and lays the groundwork for personal and professional fulfillment. During young adulthood, individuals often experience a heightened sense of social responsibility and empathy, leading to an increased willingness to engage in helping behaviors and contribute to the well-being of others. Peer influence, role models, and personal values play pivotal roles in shaping young adults' attitudes towards helping.

Helping Attitudes

Helping attitudes involves a readiness to offer support and assistance to others. It encompasses traits such as empathy, patience, active listening, respect, collaboration, continuous learning, and

gratitude. This kind of attitude helps not just those who receive assistance but also contributes to a feeling of fulfillment and well-being for the individual.

The rationale behind these attitudes is rooted in empathy— the capacity to comprehend and resonate with the emotional states of others, to feel sympathy towards them, and to adopt their perspective (Eisenberg, 2000; Hodges et al., 2010). Essentially, assistance is rendered to others because of the ability to empathize with their experiences vicariously and the willingness to alleviate their negative emotions.

It is commonly observed that possessing a positive influence on others is rewarding. This phenomenon is reflected in the empathic joy hypothesis (Smith et al., 1989), which proposes that helpers derive satisfaction from the positive responses exhibited by those they assist. For example, the joy felt upon witnessing a loved one's smile and pleasure when receiving a gift illustrates empathic joy.

Batson et al. (1981) proposed the empathy-altruism hypothesis, which posits that, at a minimum, certain prosocial acts are entirely motivated by the desire to assist someone in need (Batson & Oleson, 1991). This motivation can be potent enough for the helper to engage in unpleasant, dangerous, and even life-threatening activities (Batson et al., 1995). Compassion for others supersedes all other considerations.

Further elucidation of prosocial behavior is provided by the negative-state relief model (Cialdini et al., 1982), wherein individuals engage in prosocial acts primarily as a means to alleviate their negative mood (Dietrich & Berkowitz, 1997; Fultz et al., 1988). In such situations, unhappiness tends to precipitate prosocial behavior, and empathy is not necessarily a prerequisite (Cialdini et al., 1987). The purpose of this phenomenon is to use prosocial behavior to bring about happiness. A little research supports the idea that helpful attitudes and acts are connected to happier levels of living.

In a mixed-method study (Singh, 2019), open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires and interview schedules were employed to evaluate the connection between helping behavior and happiness levels among youth. The findings suggested that working for others, helping others, serving others and actively participating in social festivals and activities enhance happiness. This implied that caring for oneself was not the only way but caring for others is important, social support systems, and collective happiness, all indicated the expansion of self is necessary for attaining happiness. Similarly, a qualitative study (Lee & Jeong, 2018), analyzed the impact of interpersonal stress and attitudes in a direction to help on the happiness of 171 pupils of elementary school. It was shown that attitudes of helping had an important positive correlation with happiness.

Additionally, another research attempted to look at the exclusive contribution of positive attitudes about helping others in estimating emotional operation among a sample of dementia caregivers (Dulin & Dominy, 2008). The results suggest that helping attitudes had the greatest correlations along with successful predictors of positive affect. This study indicates that holding a positive attitude towards helping others may be an important determinant of positive emotional functioning among dementia caregivers.

Apart from this, individuals' helping attitudes are often influenced by their values, such as empathy and social responsibility. The alignment between one's values and the perceived importance of contributing to others' well-being can drive proactive engagement in helping behaviors during this developmental stage. This interplay between personal values and altruistic tendencies

underscores the significance of moral development in shaping young adults' attitudes towards social responsibility.

Personal Values

Personal values resemble the principles, ideas, or beliefs that are significant to people's lives. Human personal values consist of consistent long-term goals that have evolved in humanity's origin, directing and regulating behavioral adaptation. Values are acquired from life, from oneself, from society, from the environment and culture, and beyond all, from the ideal transcendent dimensions of existence and experience. Values are reportedly preferred coherent sets of dispositions that project onto an individual's eagerness for new experiences (Mukherjee, 1961).

Value can be perceived as 'conceptions of the desirable' and can be described as "core interests or motivations that shape the personality of an individual" (Spranger, 1928). Values have a sturdy motivational component along with affective, cognitive, and behavioral components (Rokeach, 1968). They are strongly linked to motivation, stemming from specific desires and needs, and are developed through the interaction between individuals and their environment. Values do not compel but rather emerge as a consequence of experiences and the fulfillment of basic needs. It is interesting how values are firmly ingrained in individuals' journeys and the basic needs that initially sparked them (Murphy, 1947).

Values emerge from specific desires. The connection between values and motivation is evident. Values are not forced upon an unprepared person, but rather, like all other manifestations of drive, they are shaped through the interaction between human beings and their environment. They can never extend beyond the fundamental needs from which they initially arise (Murphy, 1947).

Building on this understanding, children acquire their values from their parents (Smith, 1968). The parents, of course, transmit the cultural pattern of values of their society, as these were imposed upon them by their parents, teachers, and others. The child acquires their values, ideas, social attitudes, and a notion of their role in the scheme of things (Munn, 1961). Values are sustainable standardized and hierarchical goals in human living that grow from life preservation and enhancement through social assimilation of self-transcendence (Mukherjee, 1961).

Culture, social systems, class, occupation, education, caste, religious upbringing, gender, and political alignment are fundamental components that have a major impact on shaping the value structure of a considerable number of people. It's compelling to see how all these distinct constituents shape our shared set of values (Williams, 1979). Values are inherent to nature and personality (Guilbert, 1970). Many studies have compared intrinsic and extrinsic values of happiness. It is commonly observed that extrinsic values negatively affect happiness in both Western and non-Western cultures (Kasser, 2015). College students have high recognition of their families, especially with parental values (Fredrickson, 1972).

There is a variety of research explaining diverse personal value systems however, only a few research try to relate them to happiness. Personal values & philosophy of life were found to be important predictors of happiness in one such study (Sherman, 2021). Similar to this, Lee and Kawachi (2019) investigated whether personal values, such as valuing religion (spirituality), were associated with the highest likelihood of happiness. These values were followed by those who preferred social interactions, such as those with family, friends, and neighbors.

Conversely, the least likely people to be happy were those who placed a higher value on extrinsic accomplishments (money, power, education, employment, and leisure) together with health.

Cross-sectional research done on 400 undergraduates discovered the strong effects of emotional intelligence and personal growth initiative on the subjective happiness of undergraduates (Hassan, 2021). Another study examined the relationship between values and happiness of university students and found that all types of values (except traditional values) correlated with happiness. Among them, hedonism, universalism and benevolence were better predictors of happiness (Özdemir, 2011).

Thus, it is evident that personal values aligned with intrinsic goals like autonomy, connection, and purpose contribute to greater happiness and fulfillment. When individuals live by their deeply held values, they experience a sense of authenticity and meaning, enhancing overall well-being.

Happiness

Happiness encompasses a sense of fulfillment derived from meaningful experiences, relationships, and the pursuit of one's goals and values. It is a multifaceted emotional state characterized by feelings of contentment, satisfaction, and joy, often influenced by personal, social, and environmental factors. Being happy means experiencing an overall sense of satisfaction and good health. According to Seligman (2002), positive psychology revolves around the concept of "happiness." He used the words happiness and well-being interchangeably as broad, inclusive terms to describe the objective of the entire positive psychology endeavor.

Happiness is often familiar as a common and simplified way of talking about subjective well-being (Friedman, 1998). Argyle (2001) defined happiness as the overall level of contentment experienced during a specific timeframe, including the frequency and intensity of positive sentiments, while also considering the relatively low presence of negative emotions like depression and anxiety.

Authority on happiness, the Dalai Lama (1998), said that happiness is decided more by the state of one's mind than by one's external circumstances or events, at least once one's basic survival needs could be met. This phase of mind is associated with feelings of peace and contentment and evident itself as acts of compassion towards others.

In other words, although people react to good and bad events, individuals usually return to their happiness baseline or set point, a phenomenon commonly known as hedonic adaptation (Diener et al., 2006). Aristotle suggested that happiness is the ultimate goal of human lives; all human activities are motivated and guided to that end, directly or implicitly (Kenny, 2011).

Happiness by itself appears as an attractive goal. Nonetheless, adolescents who sense a high extent of happiness show fewer emotional and behavioral problems (Suldo & Huebner, 2006). Diener (2000) conducted a global survey and discovered that people highly value life complacency and happiness. The survey revealed that, on average, respondents from India consider happiness and satisfaction to be more important than money.

Moreover, Layous (2019) explains that happiness is linked to having great social connections, being creative, and being productive let alone physical health. Numerous research indicates that physical health is linked with subjective well-being (Wilson, 1967). The ability of happiness to promote good health may indeed contribute to its bond with a longer lifespan. It's fascinating how emotional well-being can

have such a significant impact on overall health and longevity (Diener & Chan, 2011).

Additionally, research also investigated the connection between empathic happiness and prosocial behavior in a sample of healthy adults (Light et al., 2015). It was uncovered that the facial electromyographic signs of empathic happiness (i.e. smiling) during happy video clips, predicted increased prosocial behavior in the form of increased goodwill-themed book selection/donation.

Similarly, in research on Indonesian students, it was seen that helping is a predictor of spiritual serenity but not of happiness. However, one aspect of helping, belief, can be a predictor of happiness (Rusdi, 2022). In contrast, for Chinese students, helping is a predictor of happiness but not of spiritual serenity.

However, some research showed contrary results such that performing acts of altruism (i.e. strangers, familiars or simply witnessing) didn't have a positive correlation or significant impact on overall happiness and compassion (Baka, 2019).

Rationale of the study

India as a country is universally acknowledged for its strong moral compass all over the world. Young adulthood is a very crucial stage of an individual's life. During this age, behavioral changes start to stabilize over the period. These changes may appear as a consequence of the maturation of personal values together with helping attitudes toward the surroundings. All these together may impact the happiness of an individual. Since the given literature on these factors is very limited and old, the present study tries to analyze the relationship between helping attitudes, personal values and happiness. Also, the study tries to establish whether happiness can be predicted by helping attitudes and personal values.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between helping attitudes, personal values and happiness among young adults.

2. To estimate the predictive relationship between the explanatory variables (helping attitudes and personal values) and the study variable (happiness) among young adults.

Hypotheses

H_1: There will be a significant positive relationship between helping attitudes and personal values among young adults.

H_2: There will be a significant positive relationship between helping attitudes and happiness among young adults.

H_3: There will be a significant positive relationship between personal values and happiness among young adults.

H_4: Helping attitudes will be a significant predictor of happiness among young adults.

H_5: Personal values will be a significant predictor of happiness among young adults.

Method

Sample

The study includes a sample of young adults (N=100) from different educational institutes in Haryana. Their age ranges from 18 to 25 years. The sample was split evenly between two groups: Males (N=50) and Females (N=50).

Tools

The *Helping Attitude Scale* was made by Gary Nickel (1998). The Scale has 20 items and measures respondents' beliefs, feelings, and behaviors associated with helping. Each item is answered on a five-point Likert Scale, spanning from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5

(strongly agree). Items 1,5,8,11,18,19 are reverse-scored. The score for every item is summed up to form an overall score, ranging from 20 to 100 with a neutral score of 60.

The *Personal Values Questionnaire (PVQ)* was developed by Dr G. P. Sherry and Dr R. P. Verma in 1998. The PVQ consists of 10 values i.e. (a) religious, (b) social, (c) democratic, (d) aesthetic, (e) economic, (f) knowledge, (g) hedonistic, (h) power, (i) family prestige and (j) health. The PVQ contains 40 questions. They are rated by the respondents as multiple choice subsequently according to the three options given. The responses are to be scored as 2 marks for a tick, 0 marks for a cross, and 1 mark for a blank. A total score below 45 is interpreted as low personal value, a total score between 45 and 54 indicates average value and a score above 55 is interpreted as having high personal value.

The *Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ)* was made by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University in 1989. This measure has 29 items and measures the happiness level of an individual. Likert scale is used in this questionnaire that spans from 'strongly disagree' (scored as 1) to 'strongly agree' (scored as 6). Items numbered 1, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28 and 29 are reversed scoring items as strongly disagree got 6 and strongly agree got 1 mark. After scoring the raw score is divided by 29 as Total Happiness Score = the total raw score/ 29. The total happiness score lies between

3 to 4 indicating not particularly happy or unhappy and a score below 3 shows unhappiness. A score above 4/5 shows much happiness.

Procedure

In the current study collection of data was processed utilizing the three standardized measures while following ethical standards. Data analysis carried out in this study initially used Pearson's correlation followed by multiple linear regression statistics. The results were computed and the conclusion was declared.

Results

Table 1. Intercorrelation - among helping attitudes, personal values and happiness.

Variable	Happiness	Helping Attitudes	Personal Values
Happiness	-		
Helping Attitudes	0.439**	-	
Personal Values	0.152	0.135	-

Note. ** - statistically significant at 0.01

Table 1 represents the inter-correlation between helping attitudes, personal values and happiness using Pearson's coefficient. All of the factors were shown to have a positive correlation with one another. However, among them only helping attitudes and Happiness are significantly associated (r=0.439) at a 0.01 level of significance (p<0.01). Thus, the second hypothesis is accepted while the first and third hypotheses are rejected.

Table 2. Regression Analysis - predicting happiness by helping attitudes and personal values.

Model	Variables	R	R^2	△ R^2	β	F	t	p
1		0.448	0.201	0.185		12.212		0.001
	Helping Attitude				0.152		4.650	0.001**
	Personal Values				0.069		1.030	0.306

Note. ** - statistically significant at 0.01

The results of multiple linear regression conducted on happiness, helping attitudes and personal values are presented in Table 2. The R square in the table represents the distributed variance, in this analysis, 20.1% variance in happiness can be explained by helping attitudes and personal values. As reported by the beta value, the helping attitudes (â = 0.152) are a better predictor of happiness than personal values (â = 0.069). Among the two predictor variables, only helping attitudes (p<0.01) are found to be a significant predictor for Happiness at a 0.01 level of significance. These findings support the acceptance of the fourth hypothesis and the rejection of the fifth.

Discussion

The study's first hypothesis suggests that among young adults, helping attitudes and personal values will have a significant positive correlation. Considering the findings, it could be concluded that while helping attitudes and personal values have a slight positive association, it is not statistically significant. Consequently, the first hypothesis is rejected. Conversely in a study done on Indonesian work culture, the findings determined that the values of benevolence directly influence an individual's helping behavior (Grasiaswaty et al., 2017).

Additionally, in the second hypothesis according to the research, there will be a significant positive relationship between helping attitudes and happiness among young adults. The outcomes of the current research, as earlier declared, indicate that there is a significant correlation that is positive between helping attitudes and happiness among the young adult population. As the attitude of helping others increases, the degree of happiness increases significantly. Thus, the second hypothesis is accepted. This correlation can be rationalized as the fulfillment of societal demands met through holding helping attitudes towards others. Satisfaction of social needs and feeling competent to help others leads to positive emotions like happiness. In a supporting study, it was seen that helping attitudes are significantly correlated with happiness (Lee & Jeong, 2018). It was discovered that the nature of the link is positive, meaning that happiness levels rise in proportion to an increase in helpful attitudes.

Furthermore, the third hypothesis in the current study declares that among young adults, a positive correlation between personal values and happiness will be significant. Although the current study indicated a positive correlation between happiness and personal values, the statistical significance of this link was not established. Thus, leading to the rejection of the third hypothesis. The results of the present study were contradicted by the existing studies in which a significant positive relationship is found between personal values and happiness (Lee & Kawachi, 2019).

The fourth hypothesis of the research suggests that helping attitudes will be a significant predictor of happiness among young adults. The regression analysis results of the data show that helping attitudes can significantly predict happiness levels among young adults. This could result from the intrinsic link between selflessness and personal fulfillment. Holding the belief that one is capable of helping others boosts self-esteem and proficiency which helps in feeling positive about oneself. Also, helping attitudes come with a perceived sense of competence and contribution which can lead to a positive affect regarding self. Moreover, some people hold helping attitudes merely to elevate the negative emotions and improve the happiness level. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is accepted.

In light of this study, a lack of empirical evidence was found after a rigorous review for a predictive relationship among these combinations of variables. However, a few studies support the present research findings. Among them is a qualitative study (Singh, 2019) which suggests that serving others, working for others, and actively taking part in social events and activities all promote happiness. The expansion of self required to achieve happiness was shown by taking care of oneself and others, having a social support system, and feeling happy as a group. Also, helping attitudes are found to significantly predict a positive affect (Dulin & Dominy, 2008). In another study (Light et al., 2015) increased prosocial activity was predicted by facial electromyographic signals of empathic happiness (smiling) during cheerful video clips. On the contrary, it was concluded that there isn't any significant correlation between altruism (Baka, 2019) or helping (Rusdi, 2022) and happiness.

Moreover, the fifth hypothesis states that in young adults personal values will be a significant predictor of happiness. The study's findings suggest among young adults, personal values were found to be an insignificant predictor of happiness. Thus, the fifth hypothesis is rejected. This could be owing to the diversity in the dimensions of personal value that doesn't reflect well on a small sample size. However, the outcomes of this research are discouraging to the evidence in the literature. A correlational study found a significant link between personal values and happiness where a majority of the dimensions of personal values were established to predict happiness (Sherman, 2021). Similar research revealed that there are significant benefits to personal growth initiatives on the subjective happiness of undergraduates (Hassan, 2021). In another study, values had a valid correlation with happiness. Moreover, when types of values were regressed on happiness, it was grounded that hedonism, universalism and benevolence predicted happiness the highest (Özdemir, 2011).

Implication

This study fills the knowledge gap in the research regarding helping attitudes, personal values and happiness. These findings can be used to form new modules, intervention techniques and new policies that promote the development of helping attitudes in people to increase and maintain their level of happiness. Increased happiness as well as helping attitudes can further facilitate societal well-being and harmonized living.

Limitations

The following are a few of the study's limitations. Young adults in this research make up a relatively small age range, and they have a lot of room for change until they fully develop into adults. Although the size of the sample was sufficient, it would have been preferable to get information from a greater number of participants. The sample groups were restricted to a limited geographical area. The sample's expectations, beliefs, and way of thinking were mostly similar across cultural boundaries.

Future Suggestions

Potential research directions include applying the same methodology to large-scale samples to increase generalizability. Also, the same results can be tested for distinct age ranges, different cultural backgrounds and several other types of populations. Additionally, the same study can be analyzed qualitatively to increase comprehensiveness. Furthermore, application-based research utilizing these variables can be carried out to aid in the development of policies, modules, and

treatment procedures aimed at enhancing happiness.

Conclusion

Based on the study, it can be inferred that happiness and helping attitudes have a positive correlation. Additionally, one must say that helping attitudes hold significant potential to predict the level of happiness among the young adult population. Moreover from the data analysis, it is grounded that even though a positive relationship exists between personal values and happiness, personal values do not significantly predict the degree of happiness among young adults. Thus, to attain happiness in an individual's life, they must care about other people's welfare and hold a positive attitude towards helping someone in need. The helping attitudes help develop a helping behavior which further helps in enhancing the self-esteem, competence and overall well-being of an individual.

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