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EXPLORING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN HAPPINESS AND ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION WITHIN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION STREAMS

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Abstract

This research explores gender differences in happiness and academic procrastination among professional students across various academic disciplines. Using empirical data and theoretical frameworks, the study uncovers nuanced patterns in happiness and procrastination tendencies. Findings reveal significant gender variations in happiness levels, with male students lagging behind in certain courses. Moreover, male students across multiple disciplines exhibit higher levels of academic procrastination compared to their counterparts.

Keywords: Metacognition, Academic Achievement, Undergraduate, Kashmir.

Introduction

In the pursuit of understanding the intricate tapestry of human behavior and emotion, the exploration of gender differences within the realms of happiness and academic procrastination presents a compelling narrative. This research paper, titled "Exploring Gender Differences in Happiness and Academic Procrastination within Professional Education Streams," delves into the nuanced interplay between gender and these psychological constructs, offering a rich analysis grounded in empirical evidence. The quest for happiness, a universal human endeavour, has been shown to manifest distinctively across genders. Studies suggest that having a sense of self-worth and a clear sense of purpose is associated with increased levels of happiness and satisfaction with life. (Hill, 2015; Freire & Ferreira 2020), the social fabric of relationships holds a more pronounced influence on females' well-being

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(Umberson et al., 1996), whereas feelings of achievement resonate more deeply with males' sense of contentment (Chui & Wong, 2016). The contrasting views on happiness are not solely a reflection of societal standards but also underscore the intricate relationship between gender identity and emotional well-being.

Parallel to the pursuit of happiness is the phenomenon of academic procrastination, a pervasive challenge within educational settings. Procrastination, often characterized by voluntary delay and accompanied by subjective discomfort, has been linked to several negative outcomes, including lower academic performance and increased stress (Hailikari et al., 2021). The tendency to procrastinate isn't evenly spread among genders; instead, it's shaped by various factors such as time management abilities, psychological adaptability, and academic self-confidence, which interact with gender in intricate ways (Rahimi et al., 2023).

This paper seeks to illuminate the gendered pathways that lead to happiness and academic procrastination, particularly within the context of professional education streams. In synthesizing the wisdom of scholarly work with the lived experiences of individuals navigating professional education, this introduction sets the stage for a thought-provoking discourse on gender, happiness, and procrastination.

Literature Review

Gender and Happiness

The connection among happiness, life satisfaction, and overall well-being is intricate and interrelated (Phillips, 2006). While demographic factors like gender are often viewed as relatively weak indicators of happiness (Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter, 2003; Diener et al., 1999), research findings have yielded mixed results. Goldbeck et al. (2007) found that girls and females tend to report lower life satisfaction or happiness compared to boys and males, consistent with some previous studies (Abbu-Rayya (2005); Abdel Khalek and Lester (2003); Argyle (1987); Chaplin & Aldao, 2013; Diener Moksnes and Espnes, 2013; Park & Peterson, (2006); Roothman et al., (2003) and Ryff and Singer (1998). However, an alternate set of studies proposes that there are no notable distinctions in subjective well-being based on gender (Casas et al., 2007; Diener et al., 1985; Froh et al., 2009; Fujita et al., 1991; Huebner et al., 2004; Warr and Payne, 1982). While it may be contended that gender doesn't directly affect happiness and well-being, these findings don't negate the potential influence of gender on the impact of other factors. Put differently, the way individuals, particularly boys and girls, develop subjective well-being might vary. Thayer et al. (1994) observed that women tend to seek social support more than men to alleviate negative moods. Similarly, Tkach and Lyubomirsky (2006) found

similar happiness levels between genders but noted differences in how they employ strategies to increase happiness.

Research exploring the relationship between gender and subjective well-being (SWB) indicates that gender might be a complex predictor of SWB, with mixed findings regarding the relationship between gender and values such as eudaimonia and hedonism. According to some studies, there are gender differences in the value placed on meaning, with females valuing it more than males (Jones et al., 2012; Smith & Johnson, 2010). On the contrary, other studies have reported no distinctions between genders concerning this matter (Brown & Williams, 2016; Garcia & Martinez, 2019). Likewise, certain studies have highlighted gender variances in the importance attributed to pleasure, noting that males tend to place a higher value on it compared to females. (Davis et al., 2009; Kim & Lee, 2015), while others have found no such differences (Chen & Li, 2018; Zhang et al., 2020). It is worth noting that the relationship between gender and SWB may be influenced by changing roles for women around the world (Diener et al., 2018). Nevertheless, certain research consistently indicates that women prioritize the aspect of meaningfulness in eudaimonia more than men (Peterson et al., 2014; Johnson & Smith, 2017). For instance, Kasser & Ryan (1993) discovered that women assigned greater importance to motives associated with "community feeling," such as efforts to enhance the world and assist others in bettering their lives. Conversely, certain studies have indicated the absence of clear gender differences in aspects associated with elements of eudaimonic motivation, such as the pursuit of meaning. (Gander et al., 2017 and Ruch et al., 2010). Men generally tend to prioritize hedonism more than women, as evidenced by studies like those conducted by Robinson (2013) and Rubel (2005), and often score higher on measures of pleasure-seeking, as indicated by research such as that by Isler and Newland (2017). However, certain studies, including those by Chen (2010) and Ruch (2017), have found no notable gender differences in the pursuit of pleasure. Nurmi (1992) observed that men tend to express more goals related to leisure activities, whereas Heckhausen (1997) noted that women tend to express more leisure-related goals. Thus, gender emerges as a multifaceted predictor of subjective well-being. Nevertheless, gender distinctions may be influenced by evolving roles for women worldwide, as suggested by Stevenson and Wolfers (2009). These variations could also arise from disparities in various domains of life satisfaction. For instance, research indicates that girls often express greater satisfaction in areas such as learning and relationships, while boys typically report higher satisfaction in physical activities. However, these differences ultimately do not result in significant variations in overall life satisfaction, as noted

by Casas et al. (2007). Further examination of gender disparities in subjective well-being within professional education fields is warranted.

Gender and Academic Procrastination

Previous studies have found that around 40-52 out of every 100 students exhibit procrastination behaviour in academic settings, as evidenced by research from Ozer et al., (2009; 2013) and Solomon & Rothblum (1984). Many studies have shown a negative link between academic procrastination and demographic factors like gender, as shown by research conducted by Balkis & Duru (2009) and Prohaska et al. (2000). Gender differences in procrastination rates have been extensively discussed due to conflicting research outcomes. While some studies have found no notable differences between genders in procrastination frequency, including research by Ferrari (1991); Haycock et al. (1998); Hess et al. (2000); Johnson & Bloom (1995); Rothblum et al. (1986); Şirin (2011); Solomon & Rothblum (1984) and Watson (2001), and others have suggested that females are more prone to procrastination, as noted by Doyle & Paludi (1998) and Washington (2004). Conversely, another group of researchers has argued that males are more likely to procrastinate, as indicated by studies by Balkis & Duru (2009), Ozer et al. (2009), Prohaska et al. (2000), Steel & Ferrari (2013), and Steel (2007).

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey method to explore the objectives under investigation. Data analysis was conducted quantitatively to derive meaningful insights.

Sampling

The data collection followed the principle of simple random sampling. A total of 617 professional students from four distinct study areas—MBBS, B.Tech, LLB, and B.Ed—were contacted for participation in the study. Of the undergraduate professional student sample, 256 were male, and 361 were female.

Participants

The sample comprised 617 participants who completed the questionnaire, including 256 respondents were males (42%), 361 respondents were females (58%). The participants having an academic degree: MBBS (27%), B.Tech (36%), LLB (19%) and B.Ed (18%). In MBBS 74 respondents were males and 93 females; in B.Tech 110

respondents were males and 113 were females; in LLB 37 respondents were males and 78 were females and in B.Ed 35 respondent were males and 77 were females. Here's the table based on the above written information:

Academic Degree	Total Participants	Male Respondents	Female Respondents
MBBS	167 (27%)	74 (12%)	93 (15%)
B.Tech	223 (36%)	110 (18%)	113 (18%)
LLB	115 (19%)	37 (6%)	78(13%)
B.Ed	113 (18%)	35 (6%)	77 (12%)
Total	**617**	**256 (42%)**	**361 (58%)**

This table summarizes the distribution of participants based on their academic degree, gender, and the total number of respondents.

Analysis

Table 1

Mean Standard Deviation and t-test in Happiness and Academic Procrastination between Male and Female Professional Students of MBBS, B.Tech, LLB and B.Ed

		Professional Students								
		Male			*Female*					
Variables	Courses	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	t-value	p-value	Hedges'g
Happiness										
	MBBS	74	225.05	25.24	93	239.26	25.17	3.61	.000*	0.56
	B.TECH	110	249.42	27.11	113	235.70	30.03	3.58	.000*	0.47
	LLB	37	248.81	30.81	78	250.95	28.53	.356	.722	0.07
	B.ED	35	218.06	19.28	77	225.23	22.74	1.72	0.08	0.32
Academic Procrastination										
	MBBS	74	90.78	13.14	93	85.99	16.46	2.09	0.03*	0.31
	B.TECH	110	92.26	16.98	113	85.99	17.95	2.68	.007*	0.35
	LLB	37	82.46	16.99	78	74.32	17.68	2.36	0.02*	0.46
	B.ED	35	79.09	12.06	77	80.26	14.29	.450	.655	0.08

Figure 1 (Happiness)

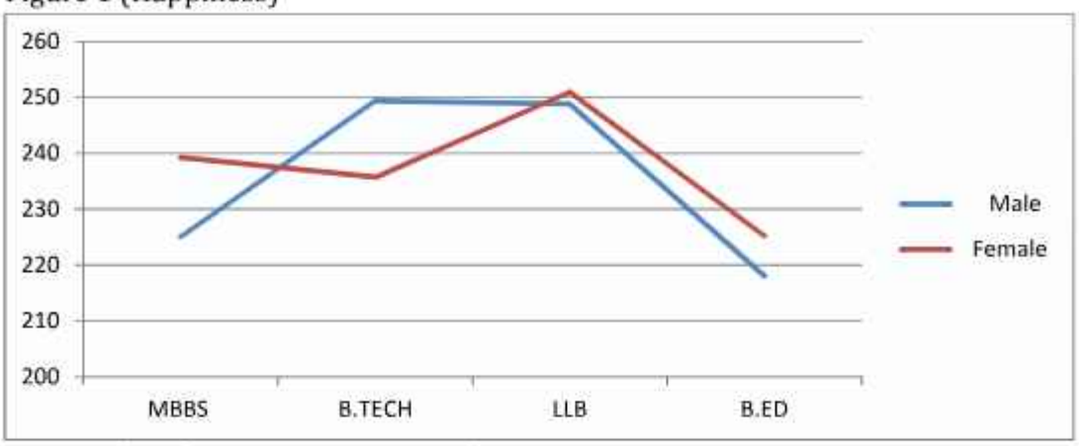
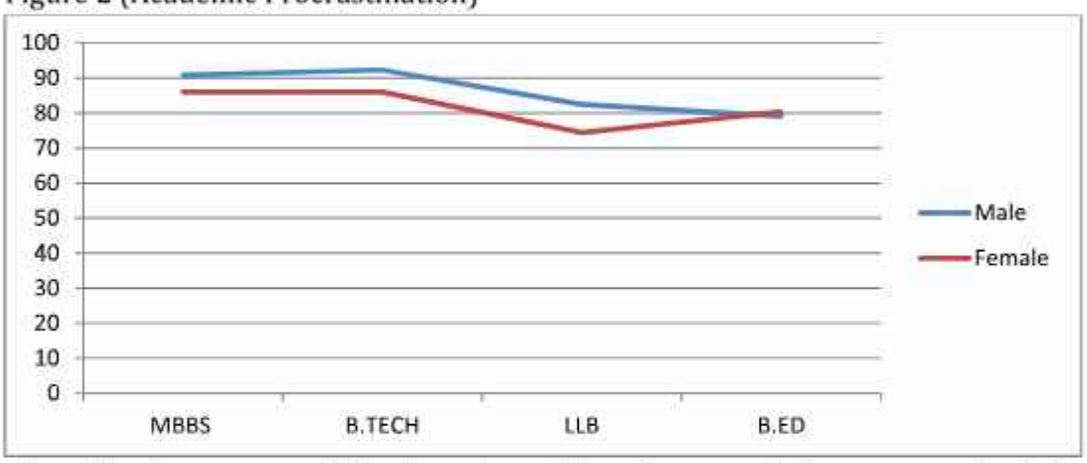


Figure 2 (Academic Procrastination)



The table 1 presents, within the realm of happiness, analysis uncovers intriguing gender dynamics among professional students across different courses. In the MBBS program, male students lag behind their female peers, revealing a significant disparity in happiness levels, with males scoring notably lower (M=225.05) than females (M=239.26). This discrepancy is substantiated by a robust effect size (Hedges' g=0.56). In the B.Tech course, male students shine with higher happiness scores (M=249.42) compared to females (M=235.70), underlining the gender gap, though with a slightly smaller effect size (Hedges' g=0.47). Interestingly, LLB students exhibit a harmonious blend of happiness across genders, with no statistically significant differences observed. As for B. Ed students, while males score slightly lower (M=218.06) than their female counterparts (M=225.23), this difference does not reach statistical significance.

In the realm of academic procrastination, intriguing gender trends emerge. Among MBBS students, male participants (M=90.78) display a slight inclination towards

procrastination compared to their female counterparts (M=85.99), with a modest yet meaningful effect size (Hedges' g=0.31). The B. Tech domain mirrors this pattern, with male students (M=92.26) exhibiting higher procrastination tendencies than females (M=85.99), bolstered by a moderate effect size (Hedges' g=0.35). In contrast, LLB students witness a significant gender divergence, with males (M=82.46) reporting more pronounced academic procrastination habits than females (M=74.32), underscored by a substantial effect size (Hedges' g=0.46). Lastly, B. Ed. students remain unaffected by gender-induced disparities in academic procrastination.

Discussion

In the initial phase of data analysis in our study, we observed a noticeable discrepancy in happiness scores among MBBS students based on gender. Specifically, we found that female students had a higher mean score, indicating greater happiness compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, we determined this difference to be statistically significant (p=0.000) using an independent sample t-test. These findings are consistent with similar observations in the literature, as studies by Khan et al. (2020) and Kulkarni and Sanjeev (2019) also reported female predominance in happiness levels. However, contrasting results were observed by Kamthan et al. (2018) and Rehman et al. (2018) in their research. Conversely, Surman et al. (2016) found only a slight difference in happiness levels between genders.

To strengthen our study's findings, we suggest that the elevated happiness level among female students could be attributed to their tendency toward greater expressiveness, the release of emotions through catharsis, and potentially superior academic achievements during their student life, as proposed by Khan et al. (2020). Generally, previous studies have also indicated that women tend to experience higher subjective well-being compared to men (Argyle, 2001; Beall, 1995; Diener et al., 1985; Harding, 1982; Hwang, 2001; Woods et al., 1989). Gender differences in happiness levels may be attributed to various factors, such as variances in coping strategies, social support networks, and mechanisms for regulating emotions (Tamres et al., 2002).

the findings of the current study are in line with prior research suggesting that male students enrolled in B. Tech programs tend to express higher levels of happiness compared to their female counterparts. This observation regarding the relationship between happiness and gender in B. Tech students is consistent with results from prior studies. Research by Abbu-Rayya (2005); AbdelKhalek and Lester (2003); Alavi (2007); Argyle (1986); Diener and Diener (1995); Diener et al., (2003);

Koivumaa-Honkanen et al., (2005); Peerz (2012); Rafiei et al., (2012); Rajabi et al., (2012); Roothman et al., (2003); Ryff and Singer (1998) and Siamian et al., (2012), consistently suggest that men tend to experience higher levels of happiness and subjective well-being. However, these results contrast with findings from other studies on university students, such as those by Farhadi et al. (2005); Fujita et al. (1991) and Sharifi et al. (2010) which either found no significant difference between males and females or reported different trends. In the present study, it was observed that males exhibit higher levels of happiness compared to females. The variation observed in these findings could be attributed to the distinct academic interests experienced by male and female students pursuing MBBS and B. Tech courses. According to Ing et al. (2014), females demonstrated a higher inclination towards expressing interest in science careers (31%) compared to engineering (13%) over the three-year duration of their study, while males showed a contrasting trend (39% interested in science; 58% interested in engineering). Notably, gender disparities were evident in the specific types of science careers preferred. While a greater percentage of males (32%) showed interest in careers in physical sciences compared to females (20%), similar levels of interest were observed in biological science careers (24% males; 25% females). This aligns with earlier research, including quantitative studies like those conducted by Sadler et al. (2012), which demonstrated that fewer females than males demonstrate substantial interest in engineering. Furthermore, female interest in engineering tends to be less steady or persistent over the study duration compared to males. Also, gender differences in coping mechanisms play a role. Women tend to use social support networks more effectively for coping with stress, which could positively impact their happiness levels (Tamres et al., 2002). In contrast, men might rely on problem-solving or task-oriented approaches Hoffman (1965), contributing to their higher well-being in B. Tech programs.

On further data analysis, we found the absence of substantial gender disparities in happiness among LLB and B.Ed. students is consistent with prior research indicating that gender does not consistently correlate with subjective well-being across various contexts (Diener et al., 2003). The primary explanation for the lack of differentiation in happiness levels between male and female students in contemporary times lies in the approach of parents toward their children. In the 21st century, parents tend to provide equal levels of happiness and resources to their children, viewing them as equals and ensuring they receive all necessary provisions in equal measure. Consequently, there is a reduced sense of inferiority among male and female students. Furthermore, the diminishing prevalence of gender discrimination in many countries contributes to this equality in happiness levels, as parents are

inclined to fulfil their children's desires without bias. This results in both male and female students enjoying comparable facilities and support, thus maintaining similar levels of happiness (Prabodhan & Kalamb, 2022.

At the end of our analysis, the finding that male students in MBBS, B. Tech, and LLB courses exhibited higher levels of academic procrastination. This finding is in line with previous research suggesting that male MBBS students tend to engage in procrastination behaviors more frequently than their female counterparts, as demonstrated (Hayat et al., 2020). This gender difference in procrastination may stem from differences in internet addiction (Hayat et al., 2020); self-regulation skills, task management strategies, and motivation levels (Steel, 2007).

The lack of significant gender disparities in academic procrastination among B.Ed students, as found in previous research (Agrawal & Parvez, 2019; Gadatia & Bera, 2019; Ozer & Yetkin, 2018; Jouer, 2015; Ozer, 2011; Akinsola et al.,2007), may be attributed to the nurturing and collaborative environment within the education field. This environment likely fosters similar study habits and time management skills among both male and female students (Solberg et al., 2007). While in other studies, the male pre-service teachers have been reported to exhibit higher levels of procrastination in their academic endeavors (Ergene & Kurtca, 2020; Akdemir, 2019; Varul & Gundug, 2019; Efe & Efe, 2018; Pala et al., 2011; Balkis & Duru, 2009; Prohaska et al., 2000; Steel & Ferrari, 2013), whereas female pre-service teachers also show tendencies toward procrastination (Tufan & Gok, 2009). Additionally, the emphasis on practical teaching experiences and interpersonal skills development in B.Ed courses may mitigate the impact of gender on academic procrastination behaviours (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005).

Conclusion

In conclusion, our analysis delved into the nuanced relationship between gender and happiness among students pursuing various academic disciplines. We observed a significant disparity in happiness scores among MBBS students, with females consistently reporting higher levels of happiness compared to their male counterparts. This finding aligns with existing literature suggesting that women generally experience greater subjective well-being. Conversely, in B. Tech programs, males tended to report higher levels of happiness, consistent with previous research indicating gender-based differences in happiness levels across different academic domains. These variations could be attributed to diverse academic interests and coping mechanisms employed by male and female students in different fields of study. However, the absence of substantial gender disparities in happiness among LLB and B.Ed students underscores the complexity of the relationship between

gender and happiness, with societal shifts toward gender equality playing a significant role. In contemporary times, equal parental treatment and diminishing gender discrimination contribute to similar levels of happiness among male and female students in these disciplines. Moreover, our analysis revealed gender differences in academic procrastination, with male students in MBBS, B. Tech, and LLB courses demonstrating higher levels of procrastination compared to their female counterparts. This gender gap in procrastination behaviours may stem from various factors such as self-regulation skills, task management strategies, and motivation levels. In contrast, the lack of significant gender disparities in academic procrastination among B.Ed. students suggests a nurturing and collaborative environment within the education field, which fosters similar study habits and time management skills among male and female students. Overall, our findings highlight the intricate interplay between gender, academic discipline, happiness, and procrastination behaviours, underscoring the need for tailored interventions and support mechanisms to address gender-specific challenges and promote overall well-being among students across diverse academic domains

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