

Living with Happiness: A Study of Kumauni Women

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Abstract

This study was a part of the major project from ICSSR, New Delhi and it was aimed to ascertain the impact of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances on the magnitude of the happiness of kumari women. It was contended that :

- 1- Happiness would be affected by variation in culture.*
- 2- Young and old participants would differ in relation to their scores on happiness.*
- 3- Discrepancy in the scores of happiness would be appeared in women living with their husbands and living far from husbands.*

*Two hundred and forty women ranging between 25-60 years served as participants and arranged according to the requirements of 3*2*2 factorial design with three types of cultures (Bhotia, Buxa, General Kumauni) X two levels of chronological age (25-30 years and 55-60 years) X two types of marital circumstances (wives living with husbands) and wives living far from the husbands) i.e; 20 participants per cell. Measures of happiness were used to get the indices of happiness in participants. Data analysis was made by analysis of variance and correlation. It was noted that all independent variables laid their impact as the main effect and interaction mode. Also, correlation coefficients showed close-knit.*

Findings were discussed in terms of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances as effectors of happiness. At last, the need for intervention programs to raise the mental faculty of vulnerable people was also discussed.

Keywords: *Culture, Happiness, Kumauni Women*

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Introduction

Happiness is a positive emotional state that is based on the personal and subjective experiences. Lycebomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005) have proposed that : (a) person’s happiness level is governed by three major factors : a genetically determined set point for happiness, happiness relevant circumstantial factors, and happiness relevant activities and practices. They have discussed the concept of “architecture of sustainable happiness” which incorporates what is known about the genetic components of happiness. The circumstantial/ demographic determinants of happiness are the complex process of intentional human change.

Culture should also be considered as an important determent while discussing the importance and meaningfulness of culture in the life of individuals (Such & Koo, 2008). The pursuit of happiness through positive psychological science and practice ultimately shown by many psychologists develops a better sense of genetic (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon and Schkade, 2005) neural (Urry et. al. 2004), and neurobiological correlates and underpinnings of happiness. Also, they will embrace the contentment, peace, and happiness of eastern philosophy along with the folk wisdom of the western world.

Keeping these views in consideration this study was planned. “Living with happiness: A study of Kumauni Women”. It was a part of a major project by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi and this piece of work was aimed to ascertain the impact of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances on happiness. The objectives and hypotheses were as follows :

- The first objective of the study was to find out the impact of the type of culture variation on happiness. It was contended that variation in the type of culture would show variations in the level of happiness.
- The second objective of the study was to ascertain the magnitude of happiness as affected by chronological age. It was hypothesized that an increase in chronological age would cause variation in the scores of happiness.
- The third objective of the investigation was to explore the relative efficacy of marital circumstances on happiness. It was assumed that women accompanied by their husbands and living far from husbands would differ in relation to their scores on happiness.

Method

Sample

As mentioned earlier this study was a part of our major project sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research New Delhi. 240 women ranging

between 25-60 years served as participants. They were hailed from the Pithoragarh, Ramnagar, and Almora districts of Uttarakhand- the North India. They were arranged according to the requirements of 3x2x2 factorial design with 3 types of cultures (Bhotia, Buxa, and General Kumauni), 2 levels of chronological age (25-30 years, 55-60 years), and 2 marital circumstances (wives accompanying with husband, wives far from husband's) i.e; 20 participants per cell. The schematic presentation of the experimental design is as follows:

Table 1
Schematic presentation of experimental design

	A1		A2		A3	
	B1	B2	B1	B2	B1	B2
C1	20	20	20	20	20	20
C2	20	20	20	20	20	20

Legends :

A –Type of Culture

A1 –Bhatia

A2 –Buxa

A3 –General Kumauni

B – Chronological Age

B1 – 25 – 30 Yrs

B2 – 55 – 60 Yrs

C – Marital Circumstances

C1 – Wives Accompanying with Husband

C2 – Wives Living far from Husbands

Measures

Here only one measure was used and it is appeared below:

Happiness Scale

In order to assess the nature and pattern of happiness in the participants a happiness scale (Shukla, 2013) was taken into consideration. This is measure has 40 fine point items that show the feelings and relations related to the state of happiness. Score range between 20-200. A low score indicates high level of happiness and a high score vice-versa. Split half reliability of the scales .61 and test-retest reliability is .54. This measure has been successfully used in the other studies of mental health (Bisht, 2013).

Procedure

At first the investigator targeted the places from where the data collection had to be taken place, The Bhotia sample was taken from Dharchula and Pithoragarh

and Buxas were taken near of Ram Nagar Uttarakhand. So far as the matter of general Kumauni population was concerned data were collected from Almora Uttarakhand. The researcher took the help of Gram Pradhans and for Mukhiyas while collecting the data of tribal women. Data collection was done individually/ in-group as per convenience and availability of the participants and best efforts were made to avoid external distractions.

Results

Obtained data were analyzed in 3-way analysis of variance and they are reported below:

Table 2
Summary table of analysis of variance shown in the impact of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances on happiness

Sources of variation	Ss	df	MS	F
A	6.24	3	3.12	8.21
B	1.58	1	1.58	3.02
C	1.84	1	1.84	4.84
AB	6.58	2	3.29	8.66
AC	8.26	2	4.13	10.86
BC	3.39	1	3.39	8.92
ABC	7.76	2	3.88	10.21
Error within	584.64	228	0.38	

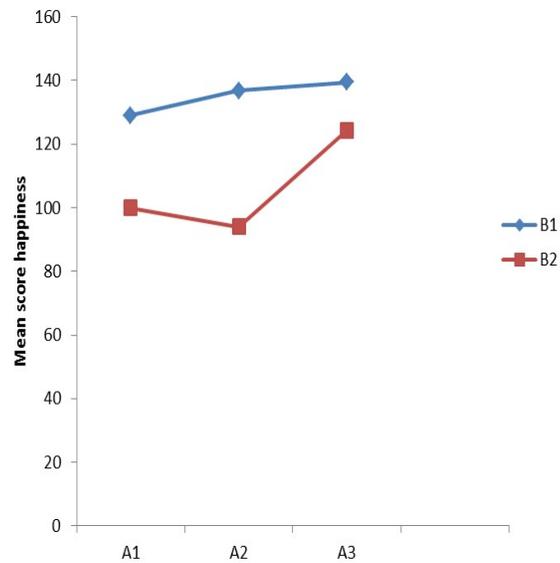
239

The table clearly reveals that cultural variation laid its' significant impact on the magnitude of happiness ($F, 2, 239=8.21 P < .01$). Although happiness is totally based on an affective state yet it was noted that tribals ($X=98.17$) were happier than non-tribals ($X=110.19$). Mean values pooled across chronological age marital circumstances were: 109.40, 115.41, and 131.88, respectively for Bhatia, Buxa, and General Kumauni samples. The next main effect of chronological age was also significant ($F, 1, 239= 3.02 P < .05$). It was revealed that participants of 50-55 years were happier rather than ($X= 105.35$) their younger counterparts of 25-30 years ($X= 128.07$).

The third main effect of marital circumstances was also significant ($F, 1, 239 = 4.84 P < .05$). It was noted that wives of accompanying husbands ($X = 121.45$) were less happy ($X=123.23$) as compared to those who were not living with their husbands ($X= 110.22$).

The two-way interaction of cultural variation and chronological age was significant ($F, 2, 239 = 8.66 P < .01$), and it is appeared in figure 1.

Figure 1
Mean values showing the impact of type of culture and chronological age on happiness



Legends :

A –Types of culture

A1 –Bhotia

A2 –Buxa

A3-General Kumauni

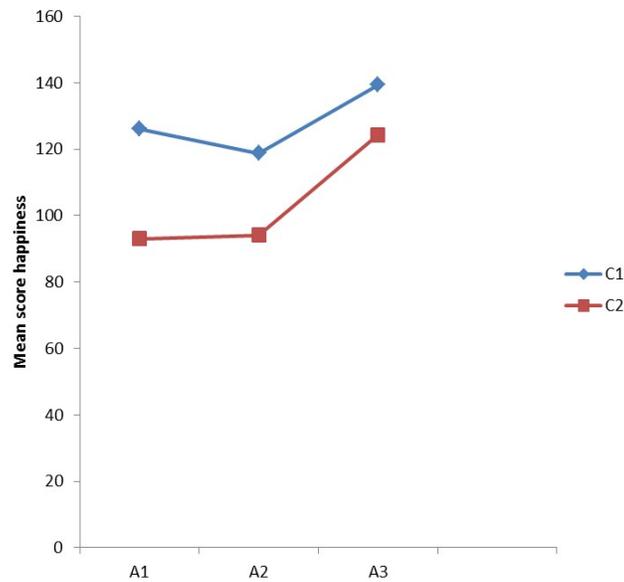
B – Chronological Age

B1 – 25 – 30 Years

B2 – 55 – 60 Years

The figure reveals that this interaction is caused due to the variation shown by age-related change. The cultural variation and marital circumstances interaction was also significant ($F, 3, 239 = 10.86 P < .01$) and it is mentioned in figure 2.

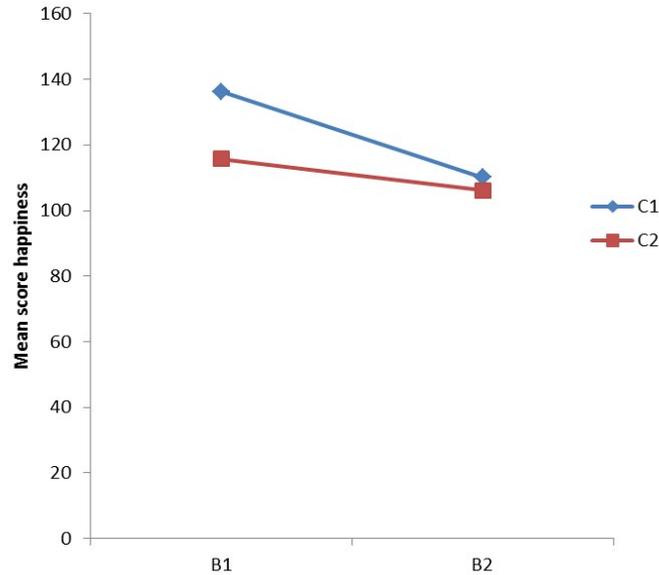
Figure 2
Mean values showing the impact of type of culture and marital circumstances on happiness



Legends :
A –Types of culture
A1 –Bhotia
A2 –Buxa
A3-General Kumauni
C – Marital Circumstances
C1 – Wives Accompanying with Husband
C2 – Wives Living far from Husbands

The chronological age and marital circumstances interaction was also significant ($F, 3, 239 = 8.92 P < .01$), and it is mentioned in figure 3. The figure reveals a good interaction.

Figure 3
Mean values showing the impact of
chronological age and marital circumstances on
happiness



Legends :

B – Chronological Age

B1 – 25 – 30 Years

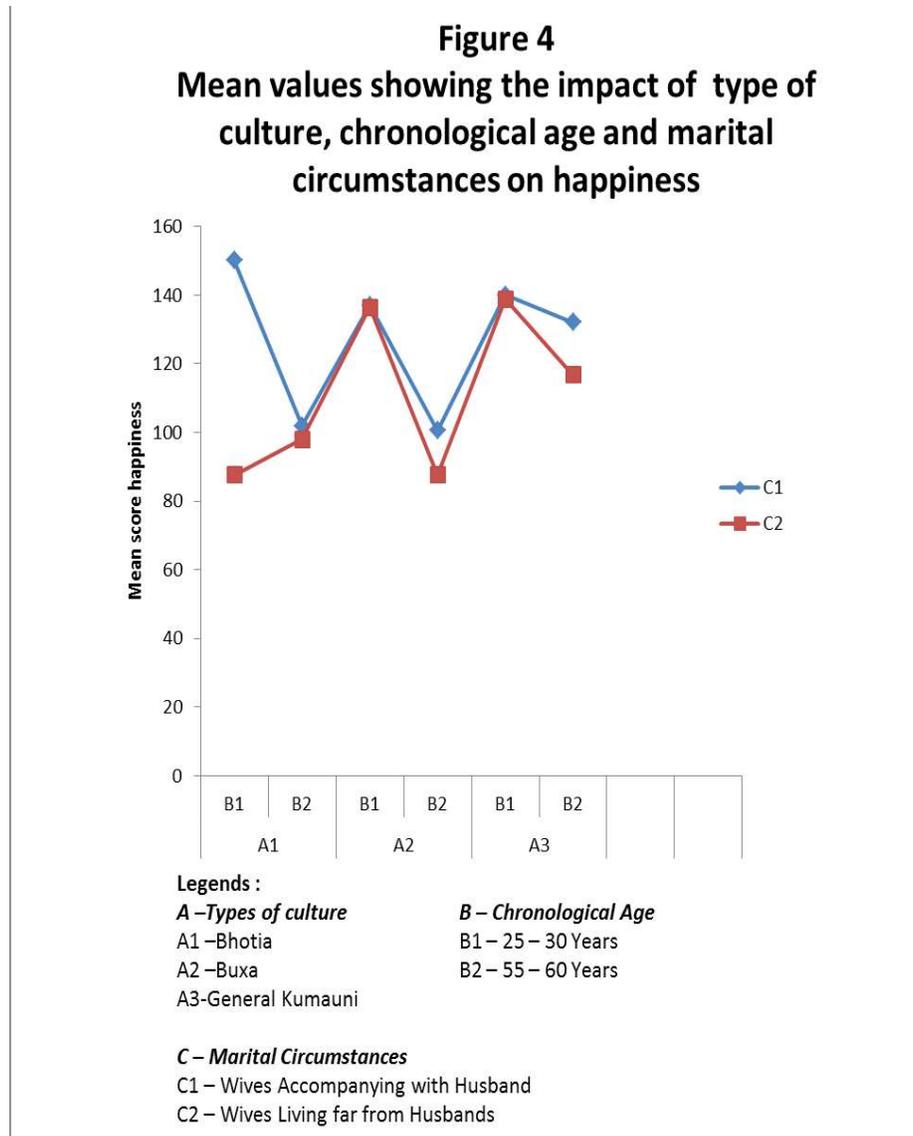
B2 – 55 – 60 Years

C – Marital Circumstances

C1 – Wives Accompanying with Husband

C2 – Wives Living far from Husbands

The three-way interaction of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances were significant ($F, 3, 239 = 10.21$ $P < .01$), and it is revealed in figure 4.



Findings in nutshell reveal that the magnitude of happiness is affected by cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances. It was also noticed

that these variables affected the magnitude of happiness as main effects and interactions.

Discussion

Obtained data were analyzed by three-way analysis of variance and interpreted in terms of cultural variation, chronological age, and marital circumstances as effectors of happiness. Prior to the inception of this study, some hypotheses were formulated and the findings will be discussed accordingly.

(i) Variation in culture would cause variation in happiness

Our first and foremost concern was related to the impact of cultural variation on happiness. It was contended that variation in culture would evince its impact on the level of happiness and participants hailing from various cultural segments would show differences in relation to their scores on life satisfaction and happiness. Our findings confirmed our hypothesis and it was noted that tribals, in general, were happier than non tribals

Our findings are a clear indicator of culture-related variation in happiness. Actually, the magnitude of the happiness in any person not only depends on the cultural setup but also it is based on the circumstances, nature, and behavior of concerned other persons and many more. Moreover, the inner feeling and level of global satisfaction and non complaining behavior also general a feelings of happiness. One other important feature of happiness, as we see today is having wealth in life. Many times, wealth provides a sense of life security and confidence therefore, the happiness was found varied in various groups. However, it is surely fair to say that culture impacts on happiness.

(ii) Variation in chronological age would lay its' impact on happiness

Our second notion was related to the impact of chronological age on happiness. It was hypothesized that variation in chronological age would lay its impact on life satisfaction and happiness and it was noted that our young-old participants yielded their difference in terms of the scores of happiness.

It is a common fact that a human being is an ontogenetic learner and throughout the life, he tries to get everything more as compared with. Realizing his limitation inconsistent mode he always works hard but this feeling always produces a sense of dissatisfaction for the life and it impacts the human life cycle. Perhaps this notion has caused our findings.

Our findings are in close consonance with Medley (1980) who focused on the pattern of happiness in adulthood. The changes in life satisfaction and happiness during adulthood were also noted by MrocZek and Sapiro (2005).

Moreover, it was noted that in general tribals were found happier than non tribals. For this, we can say that happiness is a state while life satisfaction is a lifetime phenomenon that shapes a person. A person satisfied with the life can be happy/unhappy according to the situation and most often they go together . Moreover, happiness is achieved through performing many activities like, worshipping God, living with family nears and dears, completing the challenges of life while satisfaction is a mental state.

The essence and core of happiness are found different at every age and it depends on the situation and the demands of time. In this way, it appears that the pattern of happiness differs with increase in age. Findings support our hypotheses.

(iii) Variation in happiness would be influenced by variation in marital circumstances

Last but not least was the hypothesis in which it was assumed that variation in life satisfaction and happiness would be caused by variation in marital circumstances. Our hypothesis was confirmed and it was found that the happiness was varied with variation in marital circumstances.

It is a common fact that a women, in spite of her husband's marital relation feels secured and satisfied and happy became a lot of responsibilities are shown by her husband while on the other hand the woman living without and far from her husband feels insecurity and helplessness. Moreover, she feels children's and financial management out of her control and feels herself at a crossroads and thinks her life in vain. The woman living with husbands finds herself elated and happy while the reverse side of the life comes in the parts of women living alone with the children and far from the husbands.

Findings, in general, reveal the status of women with respect to life satisfaction. Better attempts are required to reuse the satisfaction level of women who required it.

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