



An Empirical Investigation of the Relationship between Academic Performance and Happiness among Higher Secondary Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the educational system worldwide, affecting students' academic achievement and psychological well-being. The present study aimed to examine the relationship between academic performance and happiness levels among higher secondary students during the COVID-19 period. It also investigated whether significant gender differences existed in students' happiness levels and academic performance. A descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. The sample comprised 200 higher secondary students selected through simple random sampling from Manu H.S. School, Harina H.S. School, and Sabroom English Medium School in South Tripura district. Data on happiness were collected using the Happiness Scale developed by Dr. Himanshi Rastogi and Dr. Janki Moorjani, while students' academic performance was obtained from their academic records. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and the independent samples t-test.

The findings revealed a very low positive correlation ($r = 0.09$) between academic performance and happiness levels, which was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis regarding the relationship between the two variables was accepted. The study further found no significant gender difference in happiness levels ($t = 0.62, p > 0.05$) or academic performance ($t = 0.63, p > 0.05$) among higher secondary students. Although male students showed slightly higher mean scores than female students in both variables, these differences were not statistically significant.

The study concludes that, during the COVID-19 period, happiness levels did not significantly influence academic performance among higher secondary students, and gender was not a determining factor in either happiness or academic achievement. The findings suggest that schools and policymakers should continue to promote students' mental well-being alongside academic support, especially during periods of educational disruption, to ensure holistic student development.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Happiness Level, Higher Secondary Students, COVID-19, Gender Difference, Descriptive Survey.

1.INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the most significant global crises in recent history, affecting not only physical health but also education, mental well-being, and social life. To control the spread of the virus, schools and colleges across the world were closed for extended periods, forcing students to shift from traditional classroom learning to online education. This sudden transition created several academic and psychological challenges for higher secondary students, who were already facing crucial academic responsibilities and preparing for important board examinations. As a result, the pandemic period became an important context for examining the relationship between students' academic performance and their happiness levels.

Academic performance refers to the level of achievement attained by students in educational activities, usually measured through examination scores, grades, classroom participation, and overall learning outcomes. It reflects the extent to which students successfully accomplish educational objectives. During the COVID-19 period, many students experienced disruptions in their learning due to limited access to digital devices, poor internet connectivity, and lack of face-to-face interaction with teachers, reduced motivation, and difficulties in adapting to online learning environments. These challenges had a direct impact on their academic performance.

Happiness, on the other hand, is a positive emotional state characterized by feelings of satisfaction, joy, contentment, and psychological well-being. It plays a crucial role in shaping students' motivation, learning behavior, confidence, and overall development. Happy students are generally more enthusiastic, emotionally stable, and better able to cope with academic stress. Conversely, students experiencing anxiety, loneliness, fear, or emotional distress often struggle to concentrate on their studies, resulting in lower academic achievement. During the pandemic, prolonged isolation, uncertainty about examinations, health concerns, and reduced social interaction significantly affected students' happiness and mental health.

Several psychological and educational theories suggest that academic performance and happiness are closely interconnected. Positive emotions enhance cognitive functioning, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and memory, thereby improving academic outcomes. Likewise, successful academic achievement increases students' confidence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction, contributing to greater happiness. However, during the COVID-19 period, this relationship may have been influenced by various external factors such as family support, socioeconomic status, availability of digital resources, parental involvement, and emotional resilience.

Higher secondary education represents a critical stage in a student's academic career, as performance at this level often determines future educational and career opportunities. Therefore, understanding how happiness influenced academic performance during the pandemic is essential for educators, policymakers, parents, and mental health professionals. Such understanding can help develop educational policies and support systems that promote both academic excellence and psychological well-being, particularly during emergencies and crises.

Although several studies have examined either academic performance or mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, relatively fewer studies have focused specifically on the relationship between academic performance and happiness levels among higher secondary students. This research aims to bridge that gap by exploring whether happier students performed well academically during the pandemic and identifying the factors that influenced this relationship.

The findings of this study may provide valuable insights for educational institutions to design effective interventions, counseling services, and student support programmes that foster both academic success and emotional well-being. Furthermore, the study may contribute to the existing body of educational research by highlighting the importance of integrating mental health promotion into the educational system, especially during periods of crisis. Thus, investigating the relationship between academic performance and happiness levels among higher secondary students during the COVID-19 period is both timely and significant for improving the quality of education and students' overall development.

Operational Definition

Academic performance: Academic achievement or academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has attained their short- or long-term educational goals. Completion of educational benchmarks such as secondary school and bachelor's degrees represent academic achievements.

Happiness: Happiness, in psychology, a state of emotional well-being that a person experiences either in a narrow sense, when good things happen in a specific moment.

Objectives:

- ❖ To determine the relationship between academic performance and happiness level among the students
- ❖ To study the difference between the level of happiness among the students of secondary education in terms of their gender.
- ❖ To study the difference between the academic performances among the students of secondary education in terms of their gender.

Hypotheses:

Ho1: There will be no significant relationship between academic performance and happiness level of the students.

Ho2: There will be no significance difference between the level of happiness among the students of secondary education in terms of their gender.

Ho3: There will be no difference between the academic performances among the students of secondary education in terms of their gender

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey method was used in order to collect for relevant data for the present study. The study's population consisted of three schools under south Tripura district.

2.1 Data and Sources of Data

For this study secondary data has been collected from the 200 school students from Manu H.S School, Harina H.S School and Sabroom English Medium School, both boys and girls were chosen as the sample for this study. Simple random sampling techniques were used for selection of sample.

2.2 Tools of the study

The "Happiness scale", developed by Dr. Himanshi Rastogi, & Dr. Janki Moorjani was adopted by the researcher in the current investigation.

2.3 Analysis and Interpretation of data

In accordance with the study's goals, statistical analysis testing were conducted the results are arranged in accordance with the objectives sequence below.

Objective 1: To determine the relationship between academic performance and happiness level among the students

Ho1: There will be no significant relationship between academic performance and happiness level of the students.

Table no. 1: Presents the relationship between academic performance and happiness level among the students.

Variables	No. of students	R value	df	Level of significance	Remark
Happiness level	200	0.09	198	Not significant	Slight relationship
Academic performance					

Interpretation: The study reveals that academic performance and happiness level are not significantly related among higher secondary students. The obtained correlation ($r = 0.09$) indicates only a slight positive relationship, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, Objective-1 is achieved, and the null hypothesis is accepted.

Objectives 2: To study the difference between the level of happiness among the students of secondary education in terms of their gender.

Ho2: There will be no significance difference between the levels of happiness among the students of secondary education in terms of their gender.

Table no.2: Represent the table of significance difference between the level of happiness among the students of secondary education in terms of their gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	D	df	t-value	Level of Significance (0.05)
Male	104	75.79	12.59	1.88	196	0.62	Not significant
Female	97	74.61	13.85				

Interpretation: table No. 2 presents the comparison of the level of happiness among secondary education students based on their gender. The mean happiness score of male students is 75.79 ($SD = 12.59$, $N = 104$), whereas the mean happiness score of female students is 74.61 ($SD = 13.85$, $N = 97$). The calculated t-value is 0.62 with $df = 196$, which is not significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Since the obtained t-value (0.62) is lower than the critical t-value at the 0.05 level, the difference between the mean happiness scores of male and female students is not statistically significant. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the level of happiness among secondary education students with respect to their gender.

Objectives 3: To study the difference between the academic performances among the students of secondary education in terms of their gender.

Ho3: There will be no difference between the academic performances among the students of secondary education in terms of their gender.

Table No 3: Table represents the academic performances among the students of secondary education in terms of their gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	D	df	t-value	Level of significance (0.5)
Male	104	75.79	12.59	1.68	198	0.63	Not significant
Female	97	74.61	13.85				

Interpretation: The table shows that the mean academic performance of male students ($M = 75.79$) is slightly higher than that of female students ($M = 74.61$). However, the obtained t-value (0.63) is not significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is accepted, indicating that there is no significant

difference in the academic performance of secondary education students based on gender. Thus, Objective 3 is achieved.

CONCLUSION: The table shows that the mean academic performance of male students ($M = 75.79$) is slightly higher than that of female students ($M = 74.61$). However, the obtained t -value (0.63) is not significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of secondary education students based on gender. Thus, Objective 3 is achieved. The findings revealed that there was a very slight positive relationship between academic achievement and happiness level ($r = 0.09$). However, this relationship was not statistically significant, indicating that students' happiness level did not have a meaningful influence on their academic achievement during the COVID-19 period. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was accepted. The study further found that there was no significant difference in the happiness level of male and female students. Although the mean happiness score of male students was slightly higher than that of female students, the difference was not statistically significant. Hence, the second null hypothesis was accepted. Similarly, the results showed no significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students. While male students obtained a slightly higher mean score than female students, the difference was insignificant. Therefore, the third null hypothesis was also accepted.

Overall, the study concludes that during the COVID-19 pandemic, both academic achievement and happiness level were affected by various external factors such as online learning, limited social interaction, family environment, and uncertainty. These factors may have reduced the direct association between happiness and academic performance. The findings suggest that educators, parents, and policymakers should focus on promoting students' mental well-being alongside academic support to help them cope with challenging situations. Creating a positive learning environment, providing emotional support, and ensuring equal educational opportunities can contribute to both students' happiness and academic success. This study provides useful insights for future educational planning and highlights the importance of addressing both psychological well-being and academic development during times of crisis.

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