

Gender Differences in Happiness among the Nurses

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Abstract

Introduction: Happiness and, consequently, mental health play an important role in career success. Since nurses have an important and demanding job in deal with the human body and mind, understanding their psychological issues is of the uttermost importance. The aim of this study was to determine gender differences in happiness among the nurses in Shahid Beheshti Hospital of Yasuj.

Methodology: This Cross-sectional study was conducted on 200 male and female nurses who were selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected by using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire. Research data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and the independent t-test.

Findings: Results showed that nurses felt less than normal level of happiness, and no significant difference in terms of happiness between males and females. Comparison of subscales showed that satisfaction and positive mood were significantly higher in female than male nurses.

Conclusion: The positive mood and emotional relationship are higher in females than in males. This may be because women have higher levels of social relationships and express themselves more often in social relationships. As a result, they experience greater satisfaction in both their career and their life.

Keywords: Happiness, Nurses, Gender.

Introduction

Happiness is a fundamental concept and component of people life. Many disciplines, including different branches of psychology, seek to understand and facilitate happiness in people's life (2, 19). Theorists have presented several definitions for happiness, which all share a positive emotional experience. Happiness refers to having many positive feelings, high life satisfaction, and the lack of negative feelings. These three are the important factors of well-being (11, 18).

Happiness and, consequently, mental health play an important role in career success. Chaiprasit and Santidhirakul (5) divided the factors of happiness in workplace into five factors including: 1-inspiring environment; 2- common value of the organization; 3- positive relations in the workplace; 4- job quality; and 5- leadership. Among them, three factors of communication, quality, and leadership are capable of predicting happiness in the workplaces by 59.4%. Studies show that happiness guarantees a peaceful life, and if it spreads in the workplace, while the drivers of happiness are also active in the workplace, significant progress can be seen in every sector.

Nursing is a job that necessitates women's involvement. However, the nature of the job requires both happy men and women to be satisfied with their job and capable of doing it efficiently when interacting with patients. Understanding the nurses' psychological and mental problems is of particular importance considering their important and heavy job and their involvement with the human body and mind (14-17).

Given the importance of this issue in nurses' career success, the male and female nurses' happiness was compared in the present study. The research hypothesis was as follows: There is a significant difference between the male and female nurses' happiness.

Materials and Methods

This was a Cross-sectional study, in which 200 male and female nurses of the Shadid Beheshti Hospital of Yasuj were selected by using simple random sampling, and the research questionnaires were then distributed among them. A total of 180 completed questionnaires (by 95 males and 85 females) were collected and used as the analysis basis.

For gathering the data *Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI)* Questionnaire used. The test consists of 29 multiple choice items. The scoring of the choices was as follows:

A=0, B=1, C=2, D=3. The highest score that a subject can obtain in this scale was 87, which showed the greatest happiness, whereas the 0 as the lowest score indicated the subject's life dissatisfaction and depression. The normal test score was 40-42.

In the present study, the reliability of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was obtained as 0.92, using the Cronbach's alpha.

After collecting the questionnaires, data were analyzed by using SPSS 21 and the independent t-test.

Findings

Of the 180 respondents to the questionnaire, 95 were male and 85 were female. As can be seen in Table 1, the mean happiness score was 41.16 in men and 42.32 in women.

Table-1: The mean happiness score by gender

s					
Std. Error Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Gender variable	
1.33	12.96	41.16	95	Male	Happiness
1.42	13.16	42.32	85	Female	

Table-2: Results of independent t-test to compare Means happiness between male and female nurses

Happiness in Male and Female	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig	Mean difference	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig						Upper Bound	Lower Bound
Equal variance not assumed			.595-	175	0.553	1.16-	1.95	5.01-	2.68

The findings regarding the constituent elements of mood were significantly different in males and females. This is reported in Tables 3 and 4.

Table-3: Descriptive data from the Nurses' happiness tests by gender and subscale

Positive Mood		Satisfaction		Self-respect		Welfare subject		Life satisfaction		Subscale Group
Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	
1.78	4.05	2.14	6.00	4.51	9.66	2.76	7.03	4.16	10.62	Male
1.79	4.63	1.89	6.60	3.57	10.18	2.80	7.34	4.51	10.22	female

Table-4: Independent t-test to compare the difference between the means scores of happiness in women and men

t- test to compare the means			Std. Deviation difference between scores of happiness	Mean difference between scores of happiness	Subscale
Sig	df	t			
.552	178	-0.596	0.64	0.41	Life satisfaction
0.316	178	-1.006	0.41	-0.30	Welfare subject
0.519	178	0.647	0.52	-0.52	Self-respect
0.048	178	-1.99	0.30	-0.006	Satisfaction
0.30	178	-2.18	0.26	-0.58	Positive Mood

Following the distribution of happiness score is based on gender in Yasuj Shahid Beheshti hospital.

Table-5: The distribution of happiness Score based on gender in nurses

Gender				variable	
Total	male	female		Score level	Different levels of happiness
14	7	7	Frequency	40-42	
7.7	7.36	8.23	Percent		
75	42	33	Frequency	Less than 40	
42.8	44.21	38.82	Percent		
91	46	45	Frequency	More than 40	
50.55	48.42	52.94	Percent		
180	95	85	Frequency	Total sample	
100	52.77	47.22	Percent		

In addition, only 7.7% of the nurses were at the normal happiness level which could be an alarm to health authorities.

Discussion and Conclusion

Results showed that there is no significant difference between males and females regarding the scores of nurses' happiness, which is consistent with findings of other researchers including Diener et al, who argued that happiness is equal in males and females (7). Our results are also in accordance with the study of Alavi, who did not find a significant difference between male and female Iranian university students (1). Fujita et al, found that a slight difference

between men and women's happiness (8). In a study conducted by Bagheri et al. on nurses, no significant difference is observed between demographic characteristics including age, gender, education, etc (3). In terms of happiness level, which is consistent with our results. In a study conducted by Sahraian et al on the relationship between religious attitude and happiness in medical students at Shiraz University, no significant difference was observed between males and females regarding happiness, which is consistent with the result of the present study (13). The results of the present study are inconsistent with the study of Khosravi and Cheragh Mollaei in terms of overall happiness score and gender. In that study, the researcher focused on gender to conduct a comparative study on social commitment, happiness, and mental health between school and university students, and showed that a significant difference between boys and girls in terms of happiness. The inconsistency between the results of these two studies can be attributed to the different statistical populations. Male and female students and university students enjoy their spare time and have delightful experiences since they have not entered the job market yet and spent their time merely studying. In contrast, due to their work environment and the nature of their activities, nurses may have fewer less leisure pursuits, thereby only 7.7% of the studied sample had a normal happiness level, a very low rate for this group (10, 20, 21).

Bayrami et al studied the demographic, religion, and family factors to predict happiness in the students of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences. They found that there is significant difference between boys' and girls' happiness which may be due to the high number of girls in the sample (4).

In this study, satisfaction and positive mood were higher in women, and there was a significant difference between males and females in these factors, which was consistent with the results obtained by Goudarzi and Hemayat-Talab (9). They found that female athletes had a significantly higher mood, mental health and self-efficacy; therefore, they were more satisfied and happier. Nasiri and Joukar showed a significant difference between life expectancy, happiness and life satisfaction of employed women and men, which was consistent with the present study (12). Diener et al. found that women had stronger emotions, which may be due to their higher levels of social relationships and self-expression. This can explain women's positive mood, and since they are more responsible, they feel more satisfied in their job and life (6).

Given that a small fraction of nurses have normal happiness levels and that they work in environments

where life, death, and survival of patients are the main issues, happiness and a happy mood can help them provide the patients and themselves with health. When people feel happy in their workplaces, they would have the feeling of well-being, satisfaction and hope for the future, from which the organization would benefit too. Happy, creative and useful employees can make right decisions, improve their relationships with others, and happily perform a job where a moment of bad mood can endanger lives.

Considering that nursing is a very taxing career that requires high tolerance in interaction with patients and that it deals with people's body and mind, and in a word, life, it is suggested that medical center managers, especially hospitals, plan recreational and educational programs for nurses considering their work shifts, and prioritize normal happiness of nurses on top.

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