The Mediating Role of Happiness in the Relationship between Self-Regulated Learning Strategies and Social Adjustment of Sixth Grade Elementary School Students

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explain the mediating role of happiness in the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and social adjustment. The research method was an applied one in terms of purpose and descriptive and correlational one in terms of nature. The statistical population included all 180 sixth grade elementary students of Marvdasht city who were selected as the sample by random sampling of multi-stage clusters. Data collection tools included three Oxford happiness questionnaires, Sohrabi and Samani's social adjustment, and Pintrich's self-regulatory learning strategies, which confirmed the validity and reliability of the tools. The collected data were analyzed at two levels (descriptive statistics and inferential statistics). At the level of descriptive statistics, the mean and standard deviation were used, and at the level of inferential statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient significance test and multiple regression analysis were used through simultaneous and Baren-Keny hierarchical ways. The results indicate that happiness plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between emotion regulation (motivational beliefs) and social adjustment.

Key Words: Self-Regulation Strategies, Happiness, Social Adjustment, Students

Introduction

The educational system of any society determines its growth and development. In this regard, a large amount of national income is allocated to education every year. However, the high rate of depression and lack of happiness and cheerfulness among students each year cause a lot of damage to the countries all around the world. This will have undesirable consequences in the future through which individuals and society will face a crisis in terms of economy and psychology (Shahbazi Rad and Karami,2013) In this regard, due to human talents and abilities (instead of dealing with disorders and anomalies), positive psychology approach, in recent years, has been considered by psychologists. This approach aims to identify the structures and practices leading to human happiness and well-being. Therefore, the factors that make a person more adaptable to the needs and threats of life are the most basic structures required by this approach. One of the main topics of positive psychology is happiness (Rajabi, Borjali and Sohrabi, 2015)

Luborsky (1998) considers happiness as feeling of vitality, contentment, happiness, bliss, joy, and happiness, as well as the feeling that a person considers his work, personal and social life to be good, meaningful, and valuable (Rouhani and Aboutalebi,2011). This structure has two aspects: one is the emotional factors that represent the emotional experience of happiness, joy, contentment and other positive emotions, and the other one is the cognitive

assessment of satisfaction with different areas of life, which expresses happiness and psychological well-being. Nevertheless, happiness is not a sign of a lack of depression, but rather a number of positive cognitive and emotional states (Stephen, Lonely, Harwood, Weiss, and McCullam,2009 quoted by Soleimani, Habibi, and Sahib Quran Fard, ۲۰۱۶). Psychologists such as Argyle (۲۰۰۱) also consider happiness to be a combination of positive emotion ,lack of negative emotion ; and ;life satisfaction;. Vitality is one of the three joys or happiness. As noted in Argyle definition, the other two dimensions of happiness are life satisfaction and lack of negative emotions. Vitality is the emotional aspect of happiness and life satisfaction is its cognitive aspect (Argyle, 2001)

Despite the importance of positive psychology, abstracts of psychology from 1887 onwards show that psychology has often dealt with negative emotions throughout its history. Of the available articles, 10,735 articles are devoted to anger and aggression, 70,845 articles to anxiety and 86,767 articles to depression, and for every 13 articles in these areas, only one article is devoted to positive emotions of happiness (1161), life satisfaction (7949), and satisfaction (3938). Of course, dealing with negative emotions is justified, because it makes human life sad and motivates the person to seek help, but in recent years researchers have increasingly

become interested in mental health and well-being (Moradi, Jafari and Abedi, 2005).

Social adjustment is also a process that enables people to understand and predict the behavior of others, to control their own behavior, and to adjust their own social interactions.Social adjustment includes individual adjustment with his/her social surrounding leading to change either in themselves or surroundings. Adaptation has been defined as the ability to interrelate, adapt, compromise, cooperate and cope with oneself, the environment and others (Zahed, Rajabi and Omidi: 2012). The basis of social adjustment is to create a balance between one's own desires and the expectations of society, which can affect all aspects of one's life (Parsamehr and Haddat, 2016). In fact, social adjustment means a person's adaptation to the social environment, which may be created by adapting himself/herself to the environment or changing the environment to satisfy his needs and motivations (Campbell, 2009). Iwata et al. (2000), in a comprehensive review, divide the factors affecting social adjustment into six main categories, each of which is also divided into more detailed factors, these factors are: a) Physical deprivation due to disability, malnutrition and bad nutrition, deprivation of sleep and mental fatigue, traumatic emotional processes and brain damage, b) Social- environmental factors, such as rapid and important social changes such as

unemployment, war, natural disasters, family breakdown, poverty and addiction, c) Training factors such as false family patterns, Lack of parent-child relationship, rejection of children, extreme support, emotional deprivation, over-autonomy of the child, unrealistic expectations and demands of parents and lack of communication; Emotional and psychological stability of parents, especially mothers; d) Pressures from new industrial life such as unhealthy competition, job and educational demands and complexities of new life; and E) genetic and hereditary factors such as physical, mental and emotional disorders inherited which provide social stability and incompatibility (Akbarzadeh Arani, Akbari Zardkhaneh, Paknejad and Mahmoudi, 2012).

Incompatibility is problematic since social life is indeed impossible without adaptation. Compatibility in a simple sense means establishing a satisfying relationship between ourselves and the environment in which we live. Compatibility is a sign of one's awareness and capability. The issue of compatibility and incompatibility is in the context of personality issues because it includes fields such as learning, perception, thinking, emotions, intelligence, and the like, and these fields together form a person's personality (Hatami, 2012). But in relation to students, their lack of social adjustment can affect individual and social commitments and cause problems in individual

and social health. When social relationships break down, the ability to regulate and manage behavior also disappears. Deficiency or lack of social relationships that result from poor social adjustment can negatively affect a person's motivation and mental health (George and Ecping, 2012) and lead to poor mental functioning such as guilt, negative self-concept, frustration, and low self-esteem, isolation, and low life satisfaction (Emerson and Lilvin, 2008.(

Since the main characteristics of academic success are peaceful adaptation to school and friends, self-reliance in the field of study, coherence of planning, and distance from the factors of incompatibility and lack of control of impulse and happiness, the need to identify the components related to quality of these variables is of great importance.

Adolescent social adjustment was performed on 194 adolescents concluding that self-regulatory capacity increases motivation for adaptive and peaceful behaviors. The results of Khamisi and Ehteshamzadeh research (2015) showed that there was a significant positive relationship between self-regulatory strategies and social adjustment. However, there was no significant relationship between the three components of cognitive impulsivity, unplanned impulsivity and unplanned impulsivity with social adjustment. Regression analysis showed that self-regulatory strategies are the best predictor of social adjustment. The results of Ghobadzadeh and

Shakerdolgh's research (2016) showed that social adjustment is significantly related to self-regulation, homework, difficult question, excellent performance and father's anger. The results of regression analysis also showed that self-regulation significantly predicts social adjustment. The results of Farhadi Kia (2017) showed that there is a significant relationship between independent cognitive style and individual social adjustment. There is no significant relationship between students; dependent cognitive style and individual social adjustment and cognitive strategies of mental repetition and individual social adjustment, as well as the development of semantic and individual social adjustment and cognitive strategy of individual organization and social adjustment in students. The results of Hosseini' s research (2017) showed that there is a significant relationship between metacognitive beliefs and personal and social adjustment. The results of Bagherzadeh Nimchahi, Hosseini Tabaghadi and Hafezian research (2016) showed that self-awareness and self-regulated learning can explain social adjustment.

Keith and Forth (2005) consider self-regulation to be thinking about planning, monitoring,thinking, and evaluating the level of progress in an activity (Entezami Bayan, Ahghar, and Shaabani Gil Chalan, 2017). There are various definitions of self-regulated learning, but its three components seem to be important in classroom

performance: first, learning metacognitive strategies for planning, reviewing, and changing self-knowledge; Second, student management and control based on their efforts on classroom assignments and third, real cognitive strategies that students use to learn, recall, and understand assignments (Ahmadian, Fathi Azar, & Mirnsab, 2017). In this regard, in general, it should be stated that learning strategies are divided into two categories based on its importance in performing tasks, cognitive strategies and metacognitive guides. Cognitive strategies: are actions by which the learner prepares new information to link and combine previously learned information and store them in long-term memory (Pourmohammadreza Tajrishi, Jalal Abkenar and Ashouri, 2013) Metacognitive strategies: These are strategies are used to monitor and guide cognitive strategies (Alborzi and Samani, 2008). Students use metacognitive strategies to assess their own understanding and find out how much time they need to study in order to choose an outcome plan to study issues. The main metacognitive strategies include planning strategies, monitoring and evaluation strategies and regulatory strategies (Mirzaeian Hassanzadeh, Shirdel, 2013)

Since, success in education and social life depends on learning effective learning methods, and many students even those considered weak or unsuccessful have the capability to learn them; Therefore, poor self-regulation in

students is an issue that needs increasing attention.

The practical importance of the research is due to the fact that self-regulatory strategies can be taught and due to the importance of this capability for students, the results of this research can be very important for education policy makers. In addition, planning to prevent maladaptation and depression and informing families can promote the mental health of children in society. The findings of this research in the field of self-regulated learning can also provide valuable information to teachers, principals and other education professionals. On the other hand, a review of domestic and foreign researches conducted in the area of the subject of the present study, it was found that fewer studies have simultaneously examined the variables of self-regulated learning along with happiness and adaptability; Therefore, the present study is novel. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the question of whether happiness plays a mediating role in the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and social adjustment of sixth grade elementary students in Marvdasht..

Research method

The research method was an applied one in terms of purpose and descriptive and correlational one in terms of nature. The statistical population of this study included all male sixth grade elementary school students in Marvdasht. In order to select the sample group, multi-stage cluster

sampling method was used. Six schools were randomly selected from among those schools. Then, from each school, only one class (sixth grade) was selected . Finally, the researchers had 6 classes with 180 male students as the sample size.Data collection tools included three questionnaires of happiness, social adjustment and self-regulatory.

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was developed by Argyle and Lou (1990). In this questionnaire, question 8 is common for both satisfaction and health and question 14 is calculated for both satisfaction and positive mood. In this Questionnaire, the answers are of a range of 5 degrees; from strongly disagree (score 1) to strongly agree (score 6). The score range is between 29 and 174. The higher a person's score, the greater their happiness.

Argyl et al. (1989) reported the reliability of this instrument by Cronbach's alpha method as 0.90 and its retesting reliability after seven weeks as 0.78. Hills and Argil (2001) reported high and acceptable construct validity for the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire through correlation with self-report scales of personality traits and human strengths (Alipour and Nourbala, 1999). The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study was calculated as 0.79.

The 15-item Social Adjustment Questionnaire was prepared by Sohrabi and Samani (2011) in the form of five factors: 1- personal, 2- social, 3- educational, 4- occupational, 5- family along with

8 points based on the Likert scale. Sohrabi and Samani (2011) reported the reliability coefficient of the test(0.79) through Cronbach's alpha, and Hashemzadeh, Orangi and Bahredar (2013) calculated the reliability coefficient of this test through Cronbach's alpha method and reported 0.88. Also, Demiri et al. (2014), calculated the validity coefficient of the compatibility questionnaire through Cronbach's alpha as 0.76 and was confirmed by experts and professors (Demiri et al., 2014). The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated to be 0.88 in the present study.

And the Self-Regulated Learning Strategies Questionnaire was developed by Pintrich and Dergrout. This questionnaire was arranged with 47 expressions in two sections of motivational beliefs and self-regulated learning strategies (cognitive and metacognitive strategies). The reliability coefficients of the subscales of self-efficacy, internal evaluation, test anxiety, and the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies was determined through Cronbach's alpha method as 89%, 87%, 75%, 83% and 74%, respectively. Mousavinejad (1997) used content validation method and factor analysis to investigate the validity of this questionnaire. To determine the reliability of low-level, high-level cognitive strategies and metacognitive self-regulation, alpha coefficients of 98%, 79%, and 84% were extracted, respectively.

Table 1. Checking the normality of research variables

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test variable	
	statistics	Significance level
Social adjustment	0.907	0.3
Happiness	0.819	0.5
Self-regulatory learning	0.991	0.2

Research Findings

According to the above table, it can be seen that the significance levels are higher than the acceptable value (0.05), so the normative tests of this variable are not significant. Therefore, the hypothesis of normality is confirmed. (05 / 0P-Value>). That is why parametric tests are used to analyze the data.

Table 2. Solidarity matrix, self-regulated learning, happiness, social adjustment

variables	social adjustment	happiness	Self-regulatory learning
social adjustment	1		
happiness	-0.257	1	
Self-regulatory learning	-0.454	0.583	1

**P≤0.01   *P≤0.05

Based on the information in the table above, there is a direct relationship between self-regulatory learning and happiness (r = 0.583, ρ <0.01) and a significant inverse relationship with social adjustment (r = -0.454, ρ <0.01).

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between self-regulated learning dimensions and students' happiness.
To test this hypothesis, Pearson correlation matrix statistical method is used.

Table 3. Correlation matrix between self-regulated learning dimensions and happiness

variables	1	2	3	4
1. cognition	1			
2.metacognition	0.78**	1		
3. Motivational beliefs	0.85**	0.82**	1	
4. Happiness	0.55**	0.45**	0.59**	1

**P≤0.01   *P≤0.05

Based on the information in the table above, it can be seen that there is direct and significant relationship between the cognitive components (R = 0.55, ρ <0.01), metacognitive (r = 0.45, ρ <0.01) and motivational beliefs (r = 0.59, ρ 01 0.01) with adjustment.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between self-regulated learning dimensions and students' social adjustment. To test this hypothesis, Pearson correlation matrix statistical method is used.

Table 4. The correlation matrix between the dimensions of self-regulated learning and social adjustment

variables				
1. cognition	1			
2.metacognition	0.78**	1		
3. Motivational beliefs	0.85**	0.82**	1	
4. Happiness	-0.39**	-0.39**	-0.46**	1

**P≤0.01   *P≤0.05

Based on the information in the table above, it can be understood that between cognitive components (r = -0.39, ρ <0.01), metacognitive (r = -0.39, ρ 01 0.01) and motivational beliefs (/46) 0- = r, ρ <0.01), there is an inverse and significant relationship with social adjustment.

Considering the score of the Adaptability Questionnaire (from 0 to the very severe option 8), it can be concluded that the higher the

score on the social adjustment scale, the lower the social adjustment. Therefore, according to the relationship obtained. It can be concluded that people with high scores on social adjustment have fewer motivational beliefs and vice versa.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between happiness and students' social adjustment.

Table 5.

variables	Social adjustment
happiness	1
Social adjustment	-0.257

**P≤0.01   *P≤0.05

Based on the information in the table above, it can be seen that there is an inverse and significant relationship between happiness and social adjustment (r = -25.27, ρ <0.01). Considering the score of the Compliance Questionnaire (from 0 in no way to the very

severe option 8), it can be concluded that the higher the score of the person, the less social adjustment the person has. Therefore, according to the obtained relationship, it can be concluded that people who have a

high score in social adjustment have less happiness.

Fourth sub-hypothesis: Happiness plays an intermediary role in the relationship between self-regulation and social adjustment.

In order to investigate the mediating role of happiness in the relationship between self-regulation and social adjustment, regression analysis method was used in a hierarchical manner and Baron through Kenny method, the results of which are reported in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of regression analysis by Barn and Kenny method in order to determine the mediating role of happiness in the relationship between self-regulated learning and social adjustment of students.

Criterion variable	Predictive variables	B	t	P	R
Social adjustment	cognition	0.26	0.206	0.8	0.466
	metacognition	-0.027	-0.236	0.8	
	Motivational Beliefs	-0.466	-0.391	0.001	
Social adjustment	Cognition	0.016	0.164	0.3	0.491
	Metacognition	-0.022	-0.146	0.5	
	Motivational beliefs	-0.344	-0.242	0.001	
	happiness	0.225	0.186	0.001	

Table 6. Continue

Criterion variable	Predictive variables	R2	f	df	P
Social adjustment	cognition	0.22	18.1	3,196	0.0001
	metacognition				
	Motivational Beliefs				
Social adjustment	Cognition	0.28	12.75	4,195	0.001
	Metacognition				
	Motivational beliefs				
	happiness				

From the results of the analysis of variance test in the second stage of Table 6-p < 0/01] 12/75, = F (4,195), it can be concluded that between the predictor variables (strategy of emotion regulation of motivational beliefs and happiness) and the criterion variable (social adjustment), there is a significant linear relationship. Considering the

significance level of beta and the square of the multiple correlation coefficient which is equal to 0.28, we find that about twenty-eight percent of the variance of social adjustment can be predicted by motivational beliefs and happiness. In other words, with the addition of the happiness variable to motivational beliefs as predictive variables, six percent has been :

added to the predictability of predictive variables, and this shows the significant mediating role of happiness in the relationship between strategy variables of emotion motivation regulation and social adjustment.

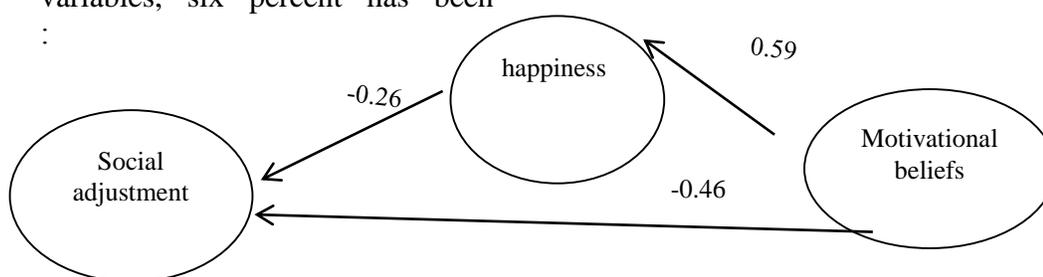According to the results of Tables 3 to 6, the path diagram of the variables is as follows

Fig.1

Table 7. Direct, indirect effect and all variables

effects	direct effects	indirect effects	Total effects
of motivational beliefs on social adjustment	-0.46	-۰/۳۴	-۰/۸۰
of motivational beliefs on happiness	0.59	------	۰/۵۹
Of Happiness on social adjustment	-0.26	-------	-۰/۲۶

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explain the mediating role of happiness in the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and social adjustment. The findings showed that happiness plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies of motivational beliefs and social adjustment. This is consistent with the results of research by Cohen, Ahles, Aldrik

Wilgs and Mesulis (2018), Khamisi and Ehteshamzadeh (2015), Ghobadzadeh and Shakerdoulagh (2015) and Hosseini (2017).

To explain these findings, it should be acknowledged that since self-regulated learning strategies emphasize the fact that students personally adjust their learning process which leads to students' self-learning and strengthens their sense of independence, self-esteem,

success and ultimately adaptability, and students also acquires the skills and abilities to formulate and plan his own learning process, so they have the ability to evaluate learning and think about it. The students will be more adaptable when they have a positive evaluation of his performance and consider themselves an efficient person. Another explanation is that students who control and monitor their activities and pay attention to the extent of their learning against the information provided, are looking for solutions and strategies that direct their attention. Accordingly, they show high efficiency in learning and even in solving life problems. These students who have self-regulatory skills direct their behavior to achieve goals, and this orientation will be fruitful when the student is well aware of their strengths and weaknesses and evaluate themselves in some way. Secondly, considering their abilities and shortcomings and trying to eliminate the defects, students will strengthen their sense of self-sufficiency, set their goals and strive to achieve them. Naturally, such a self-regulating student also has a better social adjustment and strengthens the ability to treat others as it is the norm in society. Such a student tries to deal satisfactorily with other people. As a result, self-regulated learning strategies manifest themselves in social relationships, and such students show higher social adjustment. If a person has mentally efficient

and effective beliefs, information is processed in an appropriate and correct way in his mind, which results in appropriate behavior, but if the person does not process information in a correct way, the result is negative emotions, destructive attitudes and inappropriate behaviors. Therefore, according to this view, inappropriate cognitive processing in students causes maladaptive behavior. If the information is processed properly, adaptation occurs. Students can also use internal evaluation as a kind of motivational belief to achieve social adjustment. Since internal evaluation refers to the importance a student places on a particular task or lesson, the belief he or she has in the task and the purpose he or she pursues in studying it; so, this can lead to giving importance to social relations as well. These students value their relationship with others and avoid factors such as aggression and incompatibility that are detrimental to social relations and instead turn to social adjustment.

In addition to motivational beliefs, happiness also affects students' social adjustment. Happiness is a personal attitude and perception about the pleasantness of life. Happiness also has a background of positive emotions such as satisfaction, contentment and pleasure. Feeling happy not only avoids fear, hostility and depression but also promotes people-to-people, human relationships, especially

with peers, teachers and family, and academic success. Therefore, people with higher happiness from life feel more pleasant and are more successful in academic life, which increases their academic adjustment.

Considering the findings and the mediating role of happiness in the relationship between self-regulated learning and students' adaptation, it is suggested that in order to increase students' adaptation, scientific and specialized meetings, extension chairs, specialized workshops on happiness and self-regulatory strategies are needed to be hold for them.

It is also suggested that by becoming aware of theories related to self-regulated learning, curriculum planners and textbook educators organize the content of textbooks in such a way that learning through this strategy is feasible.

It is suggested that professors and faculty members of Farhangian University to devote more time to learn and master the positive thinking and happy living strategies to help students and teachers to meet their psychological needs in order to increase their social adjustment. Researchers and enthusiasts are encouraged to design a model for promoting educational adjustment among students and teachers in future research.

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