Predicting Life Satisfaction in Iranian Military Personnel based on Self-Esteem and Happiness

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ABSTRACT

Aims Military personnel plays a vital role in the security of the country. One of the basic steps to increase their life satisfaction is to recognize happiness and self-esteem. Therefore, the goal of the present study was to examine the relationship between happiness, life satisfaction, and self-esteem among military personnel.
Instrument & Methods This descriptive-correlational study was conducted on all military personnel in Tehran in 2020. 317 Military personnel participated through the census method. Data collection instruments included the Persian versions of the 29-item Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale, the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem. Data were explored using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients, and stepwise multiple linear regression analysis.
Findings The mean age of participants was 33.4±8.32 years. The mean±SD for Life satisfaction (SWLS), Self-esteem, and happiness were 24.70±7.09, 31.20±5.72, and 75.01±13.20, respectively. The results obtained from the ordinary least-square (OLS) regression indicated that life satisfaction was significantly associated with economic status, happiness, and self-esteem (R2: 0.39). The correlations between happiness, self-esteem and life satisfaction were 0.41 and 0.47, respectively.
Conclusion Military personnel has moderate life satisfaction, happiness, and self-esteem. In addition, the findings suggest that their life satisfaction is associated with happiness and self-esteem.

Keywords Military Personnel; Happiness; Self-Esteem; Satisfaction with Life

CITATION LINKS

[1] Happiness and healthiness: A ... [2] The pursuit of happiness in ... [3] Relational skills and happiness in girls' ... [4] Quality of life of therapy: Applying life satisfaction ... [5] The relationship between life satisfaction and ... [6] The relationship between social support and ... [7] The satisfaction with life scale and emerging ... [8] If, why, and when subjective well-being ... [9] Life satisfaction and its associated factors ... [10] Happiness: Unlocking the mysteries of ... [11] The relationship between life satisfaction ... [12] The relationship between self-esteem and happiness ... [13] Study on the effect of spiritual well- being ... [14] Investigating the causes of girls' academic ... [15] The effect of auditor's use of a reciprocity ... [16] Prediction of life satisfaction based on ... [17] Correlates of avowed ... [18] Happiness and personality: A review ... [19] Family factors that interfere with healthy ... [20] Comparison between martial and non-martial ... [21] Using multivariate ... [22] The rosenberg self-esteem scale ... [23] Relationship between self-esteem, social ... [24] Psychometric properties of the satisfaction ... [25] The Oxford happiness questionnaire ... [26] Reliability and validity of the Oxford ... [27] Psychometric properties of Farsi ... [28] Happiness, quality of working life ... [29] Multiple regression: A ... [30] Personality, self-esteem predictors of ... [31] Subjective well-being: The science ... [32] Depression, self-esteem and anger ... [33] Re-testing theories on the correlations ... [34] Does high self-esteem cause better ... [35] Self-esteem issues and ... [36] Understanding children: Self ... [37] Positive psychotherapy ... [38] Flourish: A visionary new understanding ... [39] Associations of relative income ... [40] Happiness, mental health ... [41] Economics of ... [42] The effect of happiness cognitive ... [43] Positive psychology: An ... [44] Subjective well-being: A general ... [45] Personality and early maladaptive ... [46] Happiness unpacked: Positive emotions ... [47] Constructions of mathematicians in popular ...

Introduction

Happiness is a positive feeling that is vital and significant to maintain health [1]. Even though the pursuit of happiness is as old as human history, research on the concept of happiness is relatively new [2]. Having happiness will bring peace and security and make better decisions in life plans [3]. Happiness benefits, including improving the quality of life, extending life, increasing the chances of success of the family, education, employment, and preventing physical and mental disorders, affect many [4]. Studies have shown that happiness and life satisfaction have a significant positive correlation [5, 6]. Life satisfaction commonly denotes a judgmental process in which individuals holistically evaluate the condition of their lives based on their own distinct and unique set of criteria [7]; a global assessment of life satisfaction refers to subjective happiness [8] and can be considered, along with subjective well-being and quality of life, facets of global well-being. Life satisfaction is formed by reducing stress and satisfaction with biological and psychological goals and needs in people. Various studies have shown that life satisfaction stems from a person's general optimistic attitude and evaluation of his or her life as a whole or some aspects of life such as family, work, leisure, income, and high self-esteem [9]. People with high life satisfaction are less likely to experience problems such as drug addiction or substance abuse [10] and are more inclined to seek health and health-promoting behaviors [11]. In addition, studies on self-esteem and happiness show that high self-esteem increases happiness [12, 13]. People with higher self-esteem are more resilient to life issues and problems and are therefore more likely to succeed [14, 15]. Self-esteem is the vital key to success at every step of life. People with high self-esteem get more attention and achieve their goals in life more easily than others [16]. Self-esteem is one of the most important predictors of happiness [17, 18]. One of the high stress and special complexity jobs is military jobs worldwide with stress, physical dangers, being away from family, and living in difficult conditions [19].

On the other hand, it is important to study the various psychological aspects as well as the quality of life of the military forces in order to properly understand the conditions of the military in order to increase the level of military capability [20]. Employment in the armed forces requires many life and security risks, and more than any other job, it requires vigilance. Due to the sensitivities of military jobs, high risk and large changes in working conditions, and the possibility of unforeseen events in these forces and their key role in establishing national security, it is necessary to pay more attention to these forces. These conditions also spread to the satisfaction of their lives.

As mentioned, self-esteem and happiness play an important role as predictors of life satisfaction. However, studies indicate that self-esteem and happiness have received less attention in explaining life satisfaction in the military population, while they play an important role. Therefore, conducting this research is important and necessary in two ways: from the theoretical point of view, conducting this research has enriched the theoretical foundations in this field, and on the other hand, the results of this research can be used to provide a better life and more life satisfaction. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between self-esteem, happiness, and life satisfaction of military and to predict life satisfaction based on those variables.

Instrument & Methods

This descriptive-correlational study was conducted on all military personnel in Tehran in 2020. The sample size was estimated based on the formula 8 K+50 [21]. There were eight independent variables in this study; therefore, 115 people were estimated based on this formula, but 335 people were selected to ensure the sample size and the probability of falling. This number of samples were selected by available sampling method in 3 military unit. Inclusion criteria were having at least one year of membership in the military, high motivation and willingness to participate in research, and exclusion criteria including no history of mental illness and physical disabilities, incomplete completion of the questionnaire, Reluctance to participate in research. Four questionnaires were used for data gathering:

1. Demographic information
Militaries demographic characteristics assessed included age, sex, education, work type, service branch.

2. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Questionnaire
The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale [21] measures overall self-esteem and personal value. This scale includes ten general terms that measure life satisfaction and feeling good about yourself. According to Burnett & Wright, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is one of the most common scales for measuring self-esteem and is considered a valid scale because it uses a concept similar to the one presented in psychological theories about self [21]. This scale has a higher correlation coefficient than the coppersmith self-esteem questionnaire and has a higher validity in measuring self-esteem [22]. The subject is asked to answer them carefully on a Likert scale of four degrees from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scores of this scale ranged from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem. The scoring method of this scale is as follows: questions 1 to 5, strongly disagree=0, disagree=1, agree=2, and strongly agree have a score of 3. Also, in questions 6 to 10, I agree=0, I agree=1, I disagree=2, and I disagree with a score of 3. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been assessed in Iran, and its reliability coefficient has been reported as 0.85 [23].

3. Life Satisfaction Questionnaire

The Life Satisfaction Questionnaire (SWLS) was developed by Dinner *et al.* [23]. This scale consists of 5 statements that measure the cognitive component of actual well-being. Subjects state, for example, how satisfied they are with their lives or how close they are to their ideal life. Due to the ease of implementing this questionnaire and the appropriate psychometric properties, its use is very high, especially in research related to life satisfaction. Sheikhi *et al.* [24] translated and prepared a version of this questionnaire in Iran, its validity In the Iranian society, and reported Cornbrash's alpha equal to 0.85. The exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis results showed that the life satisfaction scale is a single factor (source below). This questionnaire has five items. The scoring of the questionnaire is based on the 7-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, have no opinion, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree). Score 1 is given to strongly disagree and score 7 to strongly agree. Therefore, the minimum score for this questionnaire is five, and the maximum score is 35. None of the items are scored in reverse. A higher score indicates more life satisfaction.

4. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire
This questionnaire is a revised version of the Oxford Happiness Index, published by Hill & Argyle [24] and contains 29 items. Cornbrash's alpha of the questionnaire was reported 0.91 [24]. Also, a significant relationship between this questionnaire and life satisfaction, optimism, extraversion, and neuroticism scores has been reported [25]. This test in Iran was translated by Alipour & Noorbala [25], and its face validity was confirmed by ten experts. The reliability of this test was 0.92 by the halving method and 0.93 by internal consistency and Cornbrash's alpha. Using the factor analysis method, five factors were extracted from 29 test questions that explain 57.1 of the total variance. These five factors are life satisfaction, self-respect, active well-being, peace of mind, Positive mood [26]. Najafi *et al.* also reported a reliability coefficient of 0.90 in the psychometric properties of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire [27]. Each item is rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 to 4 with a 4-point Likert response scale (strongly agree=3, agree=2, disagree=1, strongly disagree=0). None of the items are scored in reverse. The total score ranges from 0 to 87, with a higher score indicating greater happiness [28].

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Baqiyatallah University with Code of Ethics. Participants were given written consent to participate in the study.

Data analyses were carried out using the SPSS 22 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois). The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used for normality assessment. Then, data analysis was performed in two steps. In the first step, descriptive statistics including frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used to explore the data. Also, a Pearson correlation between life satisfaction and all other variables performed to assess if a significant correlation exists. Consequently, in the second step, ordinary least square linear regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between life satisfaction (dependent variable) and independent variables. In addition, collinearity diagnostics were reported. It assumed that if tolerance was between 0 and 1 and variance inflation factors (VIF) for each independent variable was less than ten, there were no concerns for multicollinearity [29]. All significant findings from correlation analyses were entered into the regression model. The level of significance in all analyses was set at less than 0.05.

Findings
Totally 317 people participated in the study due to 18 dropped cases. The mean±SD of age was 33.40±8.32 years. Their average service history was 12.32±7.79 years. 81% of the subjects were married, and 79% of the subjects in the present study had a university education (Table 1).

Table 1) the characteristics of study participants (n=317)

Variables	N (%)
Age (years)	
20-30	109 (35.4)
31-40	149 (47.3)
41-50	59 (17.3)
Marital status	
Married	257 (81.1)
Single	60 (18.9)
Education	
High school	64 (19.2)
University	253 (80.8)
Employment duration (years)	
1-10	129 (40.7)
11-20	131 (41.3)
21-30	57 (18)
Work type	
Combat specialist	236 (84.8)
Military university student	81 (15.2)
Service branch	
Army	229 (73.3)
Air force	47 (13.9)
Navy	41 (12.8)
Number of children	
0	109 (34.4)
1	71 (22.4)
2	111 (34.9)
3	21 (6.6)
4	5 (1.7)
Income status	
Good	259 (81.7)
Very good	58 (18.3)
Health condition	
Healthy	300 (94.6)
Patient	17 (5.4)

The mean±SD for life satisfaction (SWLS), self-esteem, and happiness were 24.70±7.09, 31.20±5.72, and 75.01±13.20, respectively.
The correlation between participants' demographic characteristics, happiness, Life satisfaction, and Self-

esteem showed that Income status, the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) subscales, and self-esteem were significantly correlated with overall Life satisfaction (p<0.05; Tables 2 and 3).

The results obtained from linear regression indicated that Income status (B=0.193; 95%CI=1.50–4.10; p=0.001), satisfaction with life (B=0.310; 95%CI=0.272–0.972; p=0.001), Active well-being (B=0.154; 95%CI=0.088–0.496; p=0.001), Self-esteem (B=0.184; 95%CI=0.100–0.357; p=0.001) were significant contributing factors to life satisfaction among military personnel (R^2=0.39). Assumptions for multicollinearity were examined because of the combination of variables.

The tolerance in the regression equation was less than 1.00, and the VIF in the final model was less than 2.50; thus, the assumptions for multicollinearity were not violated (Table 4).

Table 2) The Pearson correlation and Kendall's tau-b correlation between participants' demographic characteristics and variables

Variables	Age	Education	Number child	Income status	Health condition
Happy	0.010	0.079	-0.040	0.131*	-0.082
Life Satisfaction	-0.033	0.065	0.086	0.144*	-0.060
Self-esteem	-0.131	0.179*	0.009	0.175*	-0.063

* p<0.05

Table 3) Correlation between life satisfaction and self-esteem and happiness subscales

Variable	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
1- Happiness	0.411**	0.472**	0.764**	0.850**	0.753**	0.847**	0.881**	1
2- Satisfaction with life	0.535**	0.443**	0.545**	0.684**	0.515**	0.652**	1	
3- Self-respect	0.410**	0.461**	0.493*	0.684**	0.498**	1		
4- Active well-being	0.266*	0.410*	0.493**	0.508**	1			
5- Peace of mind	0.448**	0.471**	0.642*	1				
6- Positive mood	0.405*	0.369**	1					
7- Satisfaction with life	0.411*	1						
8- Self-esteem	1							

*p<0.05;**p<0.01

Table 4) Determinants of Satisfaction with life as obtained from multiple linear regressions analysis

Variable	Coefficients			Collinearity diagnostics	
	Standardized B	SE	p-value	Tolerance	Variance inflation factor
Education	0.023	0.333	0.616	0.919	1.08
Income status	0.193	0.662	0.001	0.953	1.042
Happiness					
Satisfaction with life	0.310	0.132	0.001	0.331	2.982
Self-respect	0.110	0.113	0.093	0.46	2.150
Active well-being	0.104	0.154	0.005	0.651	1.532
Peace of mind	0.044	0.247	0.569	0.336	2.963
Positive mood	-0.094	0.252	0.143	0.481	2.076
Self-esteem	0.184	0.065	0.001	0.719	1.390

All significant correlation analyses were entered into stepwise regression analysis, where satisfaction with life was treated as the dependent variable. This table presents the final results

Discussion

This study aimed to study happiness and self-esteem in predicting satisfaction with the life of military personnel. The findings indicated that overall, military personnel felt a moderate level of satisfaction with life, happiness, and self-esteem. Individuals with more pleasant feelings such as happiness are more satisfied with their lives. Happy individuals evaluate their skills and abilities positively and remember positive events more frequently than negative ones. Therefore, they exchange positive energy with others and their environment, improve their relationships with them, and feel more satisfied with their job, colleagues, and life.

The present study results showed that life satisfaction has a significant relationship with happiness and self-esteem in military forces. Self-esteem and happiness also significantly explain changes in life satisfaction in military personnel. This finding is consistent with the findings of several studies [30-33]. Explaining this finding, it can be said

that self-esteem is a degree of approval and value that a person feels towards himself, so someone who has high self-esteem will usually feel happier. Happiness is one of the consequences of high self-esteem. Thus, people with high self-esteem use more consistent self-regulation strategies than people with low self-esteem. These individuals respond more effectively to failure to prevent disruption of their ability, leading to higher levels of happiness [34]. According to existing definitions of self-esteem, people with high self-esteem focus on their positive competencies and act in interpreting and reacting to events in a way that maintains a positive sense of self-worth. Feelings of self-worth and competence will lead to the experience of positive emotions in them [35]. To put it more clearly, people with high self-esteem use adaptive self-regulation strategies and more effective responses in different situations, which is how they deal with happiness [36].

Therefore, human happiness is closely related to his self-esteem because he is a happy person who has a good performance in his life and can perform his

duties with self-confidence. According to positive psychology, increasing abilities, positive emotions such as happiness, commitment, and meaning make life happier and richer.

In fact, achieving well-being and happiness is one of the ultimate goals of positive psychology [37]. Enhancing positive emotions, commitment, and creating meaning increase psychological well-being and life satisfaction [38]. The results obtained showed that among independent variables entered into regression analysis Income status, happiness, and self-esteem were the predictors of militarys' satisfaction with their lives. Previous studies also reported a positive correlation between salary and happiness among different populations [39, 40]. According to economic theory, living conditions, especially income have a lasting impression on happiness [41], and the results of various studies have confirmed this [42] Higher salary promotes military personnel and their families welfare and therefore, eases their financial strain, helps them have an easier life, facilitates their task performance, and thereby, gives them a sense of satisfaction with life. Life satisfaction has a positive and direct relationship with all positive characteristics [43]. According to the theory of goals and needs, life satisfaction is a balance between a person's aspirations and current situation and optimistic assessments of the whole life or some aspects of life such as family life, work, leisure, income, and self-esteem [44].

On the other hand, people with high life satisfaction experience more positive emotions, remember more positive events from the past and future of themselves and others, and positively evaluate their surroundings and describe them as pleasant [45]. Cohen et al. also showed a significant relationship between positive emotions and increased life satisfaction; Positive emotions create lasting sources of happiness and increase life satisfaction in happy people [46]. The present study's findings showed no significant relationship between satisfaction with life, happiness, self-esteem, and age. According to various studies, satisfaction and emotion increase slightly with age, and negative emotion decreases with age, both of which are slightly higher in men [47]. In this study, there was a significant positive relationship between income status, happiness, and life satisfaction.

This research, like any other scientific research, faced limitations. The findings of this study were the result of information collected through self-report questionnaires in the community is limited to the military, which can lead to bias in measuring research variables. Therefore, using various tools such as observation, interviewing, and grading of military behavior will increase the reliability of research results. The present study included only military personnel in Tehran and could not be generalized to all military personnel. Considering the role of happiness and self-esteem in life satisfaction, it is recommended that military personnel be screened for these components and that workshops be held for them with low scores on happiness and self-esteem to increase their life satisfaction.

Conclusion

Life satisfaction in the military is associated with happiness and self-esteem. Happiness and self-esteem can also predict life satisfaction in military personnel. Also, due to the positive relationship between the level of health and income of individuals with happiness, the self-esteem of military personnel, it is possible to improve the life satisfaction of this group by planning to improve their level of health and income.

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