

Happiness Among English Medium School Children: A Comparative Study Between Male and Female Children

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ABSTRACT

Happiness is thought of an emotion combined with positive emotions, resulting in subjective well-being when the positive emotions of a person are much more than his negative emotion and his life satisfaction is high. The basic ingredients that make a child happy during childhood seem to be the same ones that help them to become adults; a secure relationship with parents, peers, teachers that gives a foundation to confidently explore the world and also to develop a sense of skill and recognition, all important components in the recipe for happiness. The aim was to analyze the happiness level of children studying in English medium school in Guwahati city (Kamrup Metro). The study predominantly focused on both male and female students aged between 9 to 12 years studying in classes 4 to 7. Purposive sampling method was used for the study. 50 female students and 50 male students participated in the study. The tool that was used in the study is The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and the research method used was Quantitative research method. The study aimed to test if there exists any significant difference between male and female children. The questionnaire was put up in Google form for the convenience of all. The result showed that there is no significant difference in the happiness level of male and female population. One of the uniqueness in this study is that no research was done in Assam, India based on the happiness factor of the school going children.

Keywords: Happiness, School, Children, Subjective-well being

1. INTRODUCTION

Happiness is often used as a term of subjective well-being in psychology (Lyubomirsky 2004). If stated in way happiness can be viewed as an emotion that is combined with other positive emotions which results in subjective well-being when the positive emotions of a person are much more as compared to an individual's negative emotions and his life satisfaction is high. In psychology happiness can be viewed as a personal emotional and subjective level of well-being. It is believed that happiness has an important and essential role in the well being of motivation of school children. School children often face multiple challenges that may lead to negative effects and problematic behaviors. The lack of happiness and satisfaction has a huge impact on student's personality growth which can have an adverse affect on the students' intelligence level, creativity level and educational achievements. Data regarding the happiness of school children should be analyzed and effectively used to meet these possible challenges. Ensuring happiness in children make students feel good about them and will lead to much

better chances of achieving success. Education is basically imparted through three forms of institutions. First is the school which is an educational institution that is designed to provide a better learning space or an environment for teaching the students under the direction of teachers. Almost the entire countries worldwide have a format of formal education that is basically mandatory to attend. The names for these schools however vary from country to country but generally include primary schools for young children and secondary schools for teenagers who have completed their primary education. The name of the institution where higher education is being given is called a college or a university. In addition to this core schools students in a given country may also attend schools before and after primary education. There are government schools and also private. All these together can affect student's happiness in schools. The school days of a student should be filled with happiness and joy, only then a child can learn to focus on their studies. A child should get that environment in the school which is quite encouraging and safe that the child often feels positive about coming to school. The child should not be scared to go to school. The school environment and the surrounding should be such that a child enjoys learning in school. And when a child enjoys while learning only then he will be able to concentrate well and perform better in his future. And the child will be mentally healthy if the school environment is good and kind towards him. Hence it's very important to have a friendly environment in school so that the child learns more and more and be happy.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Happiness falls under the broad term "positive psychology". Happiness is a subjective feeling or emotion that we all have experienced in our life right from the time we were born. How a school shapes a child's constructs of happiness is very important to know and understand as a healthy child is tomorrow's asset it is very important to understand the factors that can lead to a child's happiness. It is very important to understand how we can encourage a child to perform well in their studies. When a child is happy, it shows in his academic achievements. Very few researches have been conducted on school children's happiness level in the North-Eastern region. This research is an attempt to find out which category of people are happier, the male students or the female students. The ultimate goal of this research is to find out the happiness level of school children.

2.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In this world, what happiness means and how we should strive for a life of happiness varies with person to person. If happiness is what we aim for especially the happiness of children we can assume that the greatest happiness for the greatest number should therefore be the utilitarian aim of education. We know from experience that happy children are healthier, both physically and mentally, they learn better, display more emotional literacy and are better behaved. I propose that we should seriously consider the happiness of school children and linked the concept to spirituality, health, and well-being and in particular to the empowerment of our children and young people. This research is totally on a positive aspect of psychology and has been undertaken to provide children a better outlook on life.

2.3. RESEARCH QUESTION

1. Are English Medium school going children happy?
2. Which population is more happy- the male or the female children?
3. Is there any difference in the happiness of the number of boys and girls? If yes, why is it so?

2.4.
AIM

To Compare Happiness among English Medium School Children between Male and Female children.

2.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the demographic information of the participants
2. To assess the level of happiness of school children
3. To find out if there's any significant differences in level of happiness between male and female students

2.6. HYPOTHESES

1. There exists no significant difference in the level of happiness between male and female students
2. There exists significant difference in the level of happiness between male and female students.

2.7. METHOD

The method used for the study was Quantitative research design. The Quantitative research is a research strategy that focuses on quantifying the collection and analysis of data. It is formed from a deductive approach where emphasis is placed on the testing of a hypothesis.

2.8. RESEARCH DESIGN

Universe and population:

The population that participated in this research is from age group 9 to 12 years, studying in class 4-7, from English medium school living in Guwahati City (Kamrup, Metro), Assam.

Sample size:

The sample size taken was 100.

Sampling technique:

Purposive Sampling Technique was used in the research.

2.9. PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION

Tool used for data collection is The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire:

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ), which has been derived from the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI), was used in this study. The OHI was invented by Argyle, Martin & Crossland in the year 1989. It has high scale validity and reliability.

Methods and techniques of data collection:

The method that was used in this research is Quantitative Method.

The process of data analysis:

The process of data analysis that was used in the research is the independent sample t-test

3. FINDING AND ANALYSIS

Upon taking out the data (scores) of each of the 100 participants (50 male children and 50 female children) it had been interpreted and analyzed using the t-test statistical technique for two independent samples (male and female population of children).

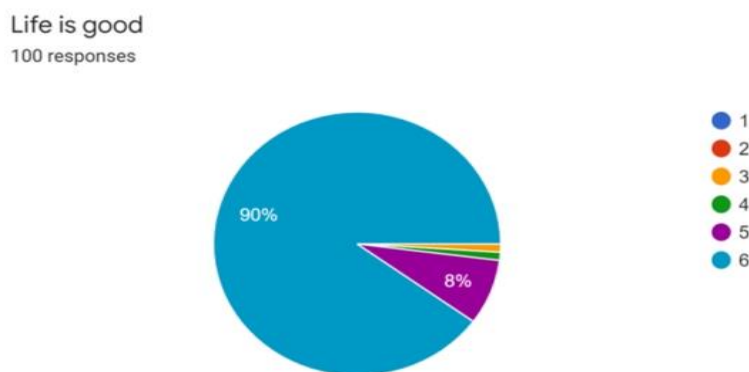
Table 1: Shows the result of the mean scores of both the male and female participants; and the difference in the squares of the means.

POPULATION	NO OF PARTICIPANTS	MEAN SCORE	SQ DIFFERENCE	DEGRESS OF FREEDOM
MALE	50	4.14	12.54	49
FEMALE	50	4.30	14.73	49

After calculating the scores of each of 50 male participants in the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire the mean of the happiness scores was found to be 4.14 compared to the 50 female participants whose mean of happiness score was found to be 4.3

After applying t-test it was found $|t| = 1.51 < t_{0.05} = 1.98$ (table value); hence the null hypothesis is accepted i.e. there is no significant difference between the happiness level of male and female children. The following pie charts show some of the positive and negative item analysis.

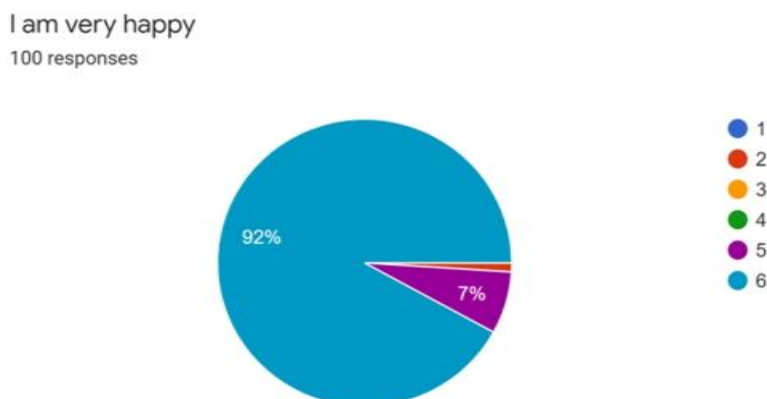
Figure 1



The above figure shows that 90% of the children ‘strongly agree’ to the statement ‘life is good’, 8% ‘moderately agree’ with it, 1% ‘slightly agree’ with it and 1% ‘slightly disagree’ with it.

We can interpret from the pie chart analysis that most of the children feel that the life they are living is good. The possible causes for this can be a good family support, a healthy peer group that encourages to do better and also it can imply that the children feels good studying.

Figure 2:

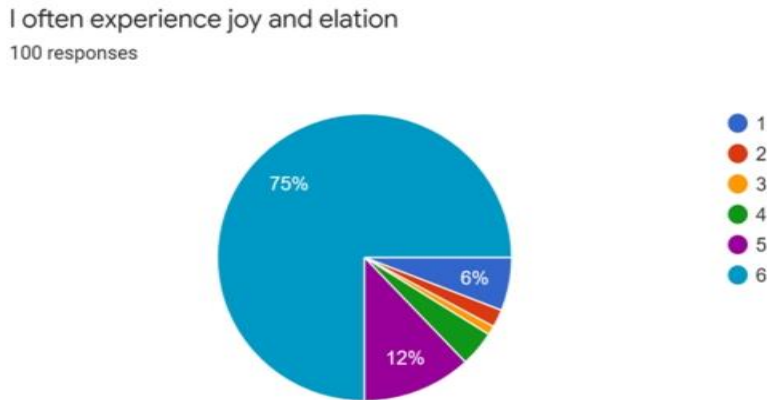


The above figure shows that 92% children ‘strongly agree’ to the statement ‘I am very happy’. 7% ‘moderately agree’ to it while 1% ‘moderately disagree’ with it.

This is the most important item analysis in the questionnaire. The primary objective of the study was to find out if school going children are happy or not. So from the above item analysis we can imply that

children’s are very happy in their lives.

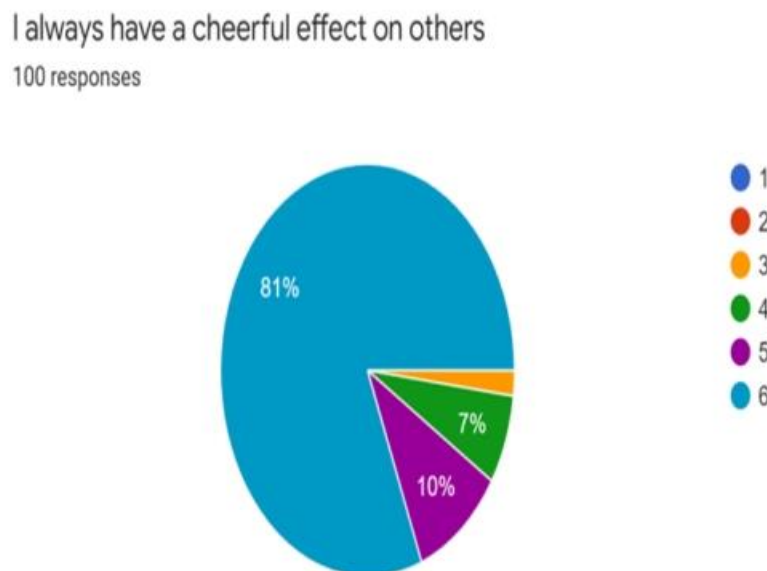
Figure 3:



The above figure shows 75% children ‘strongly agree’ to the statement, ‘I often experience joy and elation’, 12% ‘moderately agree’ to it, 4% ‘slightly agree’ to it, 1% ‘slightly disagree’ with it, 2% ‘moderately disagree’ with it and 6% ‘strongly disagree’ with it.

The above item analysis shows that most of the children experience a high level of joy which can contribute to their well being and life satisfaction.

Figure 4:

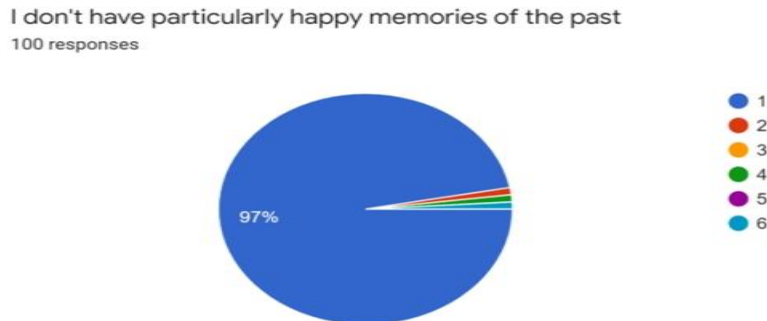


The above figure shows 81% children ‘strongly agree’ to the statement ‘I always have a cheerful effect on others’, 10% ‘moderately agree’ to it, 7% ‘slightly agree’ to it and 2% ‘slightly disagree’ to it.

This item analysis shows that children have a cheerful effect on others which can imply that children have a positive attitude with others, with family, friends, relatives, teachers for which all of the social

network of the children have a positive outlook towards them in return,

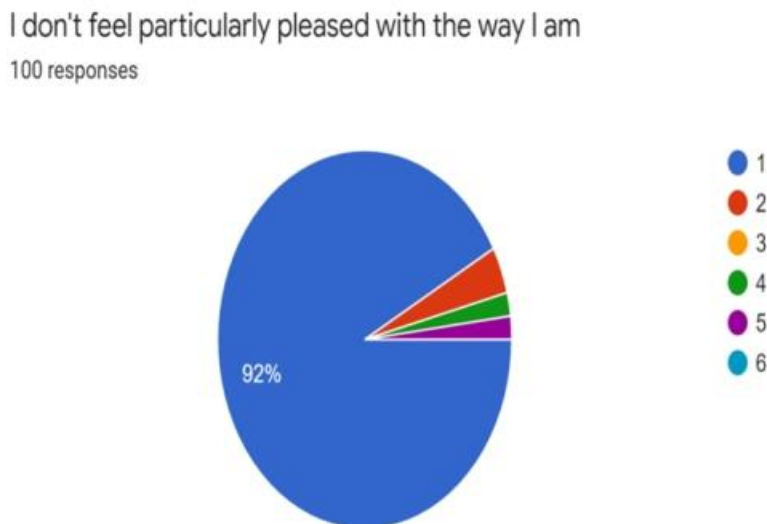
Figure 5:



The above figure shows 97% of the children ‘strongly disagree’ to the statement ‘I don’t have particularly happy memories of the past’, 2% ‘moderately disagree’ with it and 1% ‘slightly agree’ with it.

With the help of this item analysis we can infer that children’s past was filled with joy, happiness and satisfaction; thus almost all of the children had strongly disagreed with the negative item. When an individual’s past is positive, it shows that the individual will have less problems, both physical and mental in the future or when they grow up.

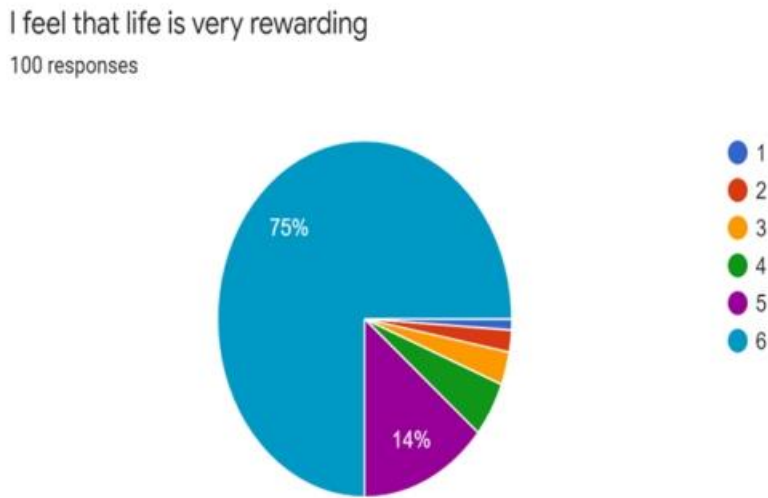
Figure 6:



The above figure shows 92% children ‘strongly disagree’ to the statement ‘I don’t feel particularly pleased with the way I am’, 2% ‘moderately agree’ with it, 2% ‘slightly agree’ with it and 4% ‘moderately disagree’ with it.

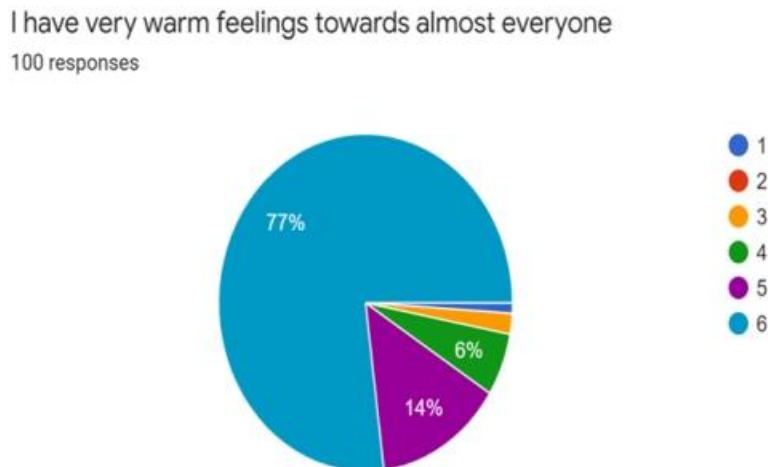
This item shows that the children are quite satisfied or happy with themselves. They feel happy and pleased with themselves may be because of encouragement that they get from others, their parents, friends or teachers. Also may be because of excellent academic performance.

Figure 7:



The above figure shows 75% children ‘strongly agree’ to it, 14% ‘moderately agree to it, 5% ‘slightly agree with it, 3% ‘slightly disagree to it’, 2% ‘moderately disagree’ to it and 1% ‘strongly disagree’ to it. This item implies that the some of the children feel that their life is fruitful this may be because there are many things which they need to achieve in future.

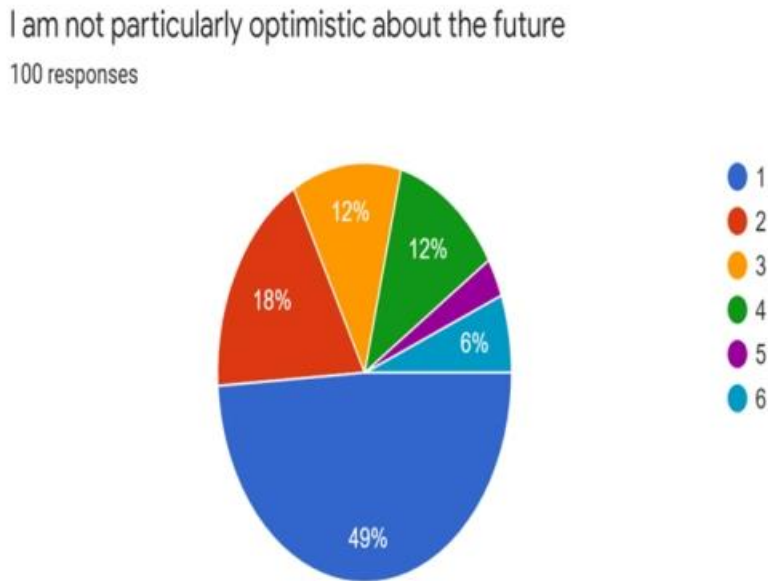
Figure 8:



The above figure shows 77% children ‘strongly agree’ to it, 14% ‘moderately agree’ to it, 6% ‘slightly agree’ to it, 2% ‘slightly disagree’, 1% ‘strongly disagree’ to it.

The item analysis implies that very few children think they don’t have warm feelings towards everyone. This may be because some children feels that they are not well treated by their family members or may be some of their peers for which they does not have warm or empathetic feelings towards them.

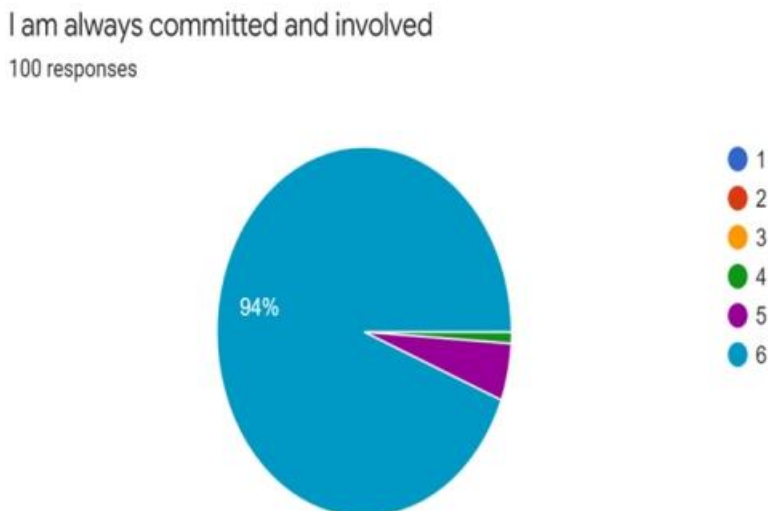
Figure 9:



The above figure shows 49% children ‘strongly disagree’ to it, 18% moderately disagree to it, 12% ‘slightly disagree ‘ with it, 12% ‘slightly agree’ with it, 6% ‘strongly agree’ to it and 3 % ‘moderately agree’ to it.

This item shows that most of the children disagree with the statement ‘I am not particularly optimistic about the future’. That means the children are viewing their future ahead in a positive light which is a good sign as they feel motivated to work hard and make their future happy and bright.

Figure 10:



The above figure shows 94% children ‘strongly agree’ to it, 5% ‘moderately agree’ to it, 1% ‘slightly agree’ to it.

From the above item analysis we can interpret that 94% children feel they are always involved and determined in whatever work they do. They feel motivated enough to complete a task or event. They are energetic enough to carry out their day to day activities at school or at home with full commitment and enthusiasm. The rest may feel they are somewhat less motivated than others and less involved in work may be because their parents do some of the tasks or activities for them for which they feel lazy and are not committed.

4. DISCUSSION

Analyzing the findings on Oxford Happiness Questionnaire showed that almost all the participants out of 100 showed a significant level of happiness. 92% of children found out to be very happy as they got a score between 5 and 6 which is considerably a good sign as it shows that the child is really personally happy in their lives and that no such external factors are affecting them negatively. Rest of the 8 % of the children scored between 4 and 5 which shows they are somewhat happy or moderately happy and satisfied. This is what the average person scores. Also, no children were found to be unhappy which is again a really good sign in enhancing a child's future development. Also there was no significant difference found in the mean of two groups of population. Thus, it can be inferred that both the male and female population who participated in the study are personally happy with their lives. It was found through the data analysis that almost most of the children are happy in their lives as they have marked 'strongly agree' for positive statements/items, like 'I am happy', 'I feel that life is rewarding', 'I have warm feelings towards almost everyone', 'life is good' etc. And 'strongly disagree' for negative statements/items, like 'I am not particularly optimistic about the future', 'I do not think the world to be good place', 'I don't think I look attractive', 'I do not have fun with people; Most of the children had marked that they agree with almost all the positive items and disagree with the negative items.

The primary objective of the study was to determine if there's any significant difference in the level of happiness between male and female children aged between 9-12 years. The study used independent sample t-test which is a type of inferential statistics used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups, which may be related in certain features. Upon using the t-test statistical technique, it showed that the degree of freedom of the two groups was 98 which were then compared with the critical value of t at 0.05 significant level (1.98). Therefore the results showed that there is no significant difference between the happiness level of male and female students since $p < 0.05$; hence the null hypothesis that states that, 'there exists no significant difference in the level of happiness between male and female children' is accepted. This result was supported by previous studies. A study by Martine.S in the year 2004 showed similar results where it was found to have no statistically difference level in happiness scores between male and female population. In another study on happiness conducted by Bansal R, et.al in the year 2019 using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire among 115 students aged 9-15 years in Meerut, it was found that male students (51.4%) were happier than females (48.6%). It was seen that 85.7% of students who were happy, had never consumed drugs and this association was found to be statistically significant. It was found out that younger siblings were happier compared to older siblings, those who believed in higher power or universal consciousness were found to be more contented and happier. Overall, the students were found to be happy.

5. LIMITATIONS

- The sample size was relatively small and hence cannot be generalized.

- Due to time constraints, the related issue of happiness of young children could not be studied in details.
- The study was limited to the children of particular age group only.
- Basic statistical technique was applied in the study.

6. SUGGESTIONS

- The study was conducted taking a city or urban area i.e. Guwahati, if it would have been conducted in rural area also the study could have been generalized.
- For better results the study could have taken into account vernacular medium of schools to find out the happiness of school children.
- The study can be improved if large samples are taken into account.
- If the samples would have been larger more complex and defined statistical technique or tools could have been used.
- The study was conducted using one particular school due to time constraint, if various schools would have been taken into account the study could have been more generalized.

7. CONCLUSION

The current study is one of the few studies that have attempted to assess the happiness level of both male and female children studying in English medium school. In order to assess the hypothesis that is to establish if any difference exists in the level of happiness among male and female children the participants were asked to complete one pre-existing self-report questionnaire. T-test was used for comparison. It was found that there is no statistically significant difference in the level of happiness between male and female children. The results however made it clearer how happiness plays a significant role in one's life. It is hoped that the contributions of this study would inspire others to go deeper into the concept of happiness of young children and that they would make it easier to conduct future research on this subject as happiness cannot be disposed as an elusive and insignificant matter. The study conducted here indicates that this is a promising topic for investigation.

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