



A Correlated Study on Social Media Usage and Optimism with Happiness Among Military Personnel

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ABSTRACT

The aim of study to understand the relationship between happiness, optimism and social media use among military personnel. The sample size was consisting of 60 participants who was selected on the basis of Random sampling. Participants were aged between 25 to 40 years adults, military personnels included in the study. Data collected through the google forms using The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ), The Social Media Use Scale (SMUS) and Life orientation test –Revised (LOT-R) Statistical analysis was done through SPSS, descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation co-efficient was applied for evaluation of results. Correlation Pearson-r was used to find if there is a correlation between happiness with optimism and social media use. Result shows that there was a significant positive relationship between happiness with optimism ($r=.321^{**}$, $p<0.01$) and happiness with social media use ($r=.250^{*}$, $p<0.05$) it shows that with more social media use higher happiness found among military personnel.

Keywords: Happiness, Optimism, social media, and military personnel.

INTRODUCTION

Military personnel who serve in an army or otherwise large land force are referred to as soldiers. Those who serve in a navy, coast guard, or other seagoing force are seamen or sailors. Naval infantry or marines are personnel who serve both on land and at sea, and may be part of a navy or a marine corps. Personnel who serve in air forces are airmen. Space force personnel typically do not have a specific term given how few exist, but in the U.S. Space Force personnel are referred to as guardians. Benefits and perks of military service typically include adventurous training, subsidised accommodation, meals and travel, and a pension. Some armed forces also subsidise recruits' education before, during and/or after military service; examples are the Royal Military College Saint-Jean in Canada, the Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College in the UK, and the GI Bill arrangements in the US Conditions for participation normally apply, including a minimum period of formal military employment.

Happiness is a complex and multifaceted emotion that encompasses a range of positive feelings, from contentment to intense joy. It is often associated with positive life experiences, such as achieving goals, spending time with loved ones, or engaging in enjoyable activities. However, happiness can also arise spontaneously, without any apparent external cause.

Subjective well-being takes a broad view of happiness, beyond the pursuit of short-term or physical pleasures defining a narrow hedonism. Subjective well-being is defined as life satisfaction, the presence of positive affect, and a relative absence of negative affect. There are many different theories of happiness, but they generally fall into one of two categories based on how they conceptualize happiness (or well-being):

1. Hedonic happiness/well-being is happiness conceptualized as experiencing more pleasure and less pain; it is composed of an affective component (high positive affect and low negative affect) and a cognitive component (satisfaction with one's life);
2. Eudaimonic happiness/well-being conceptualizes happiness as the result of the pursuit and attainment of life purpose, meaning, challenge, and personal growth; happiness is based on reaching one's full potential and operating at full functioning.

Social media

Social media are interactive technologies that facilitate the creation, sharing and aggregation of content (such as ideas, interests, and other forms of expression) amongst virtual communities and networks. Using social media more often, though, increases FOMO and feelings of inadequacy, dissatisfaction, and isolation. In turn, these feelings negatively affect your mood and worsen symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Maintaining a social media presence is typical of today's Soldiers, so it is important for them to abide by Army policies. With this in mind, the use of social media has its challenges and benefits. The challenges include avoiding unacceptable political views, posting discriminatory comments or inappropriate material, participating in online fraternization, and copyright infringement. While there are several challenges for Soldiers using social media, there are also many benefits. Maintaining personal connections with family, friends, and support groups are bonuses of social media. By communicating with friends and family through chat, pictures, and videos, Soldiers relieve stress. Equally important is access to support groups, which enables Soldiers to receive help. For instance, a former member of the author's previous unit was able to receive mental health support after posting what seemed to be a suicide note on Facebook. The Soldier's friend immediately contacted the chain of command who then located and provided assistance to the Soldier.

Optimism

Optimism is a cognitive expectancy for desirable events or things to happen in future. Optimism is also characterized as a disposition or trait, which people are endowed with in varying degrees. It is considered to be a relatively stable and enduring trait, which guides how people perceive and address particular situations. Based on contemporary research, there are two dominant approaches and theoretical models to optimism: Dispositional Optimism Model by Scheier and Carver (1985) and Optimism as an Explanatory Style by Seligman (1990).

Dispositional Optimism it is 'the extent to which people differ in regard to having expectancies of favourable outcomes in their future' (Carver et al., 2010) Being a personality dimension, it differentiates between optimists and pessimists, where optimist are people who have an orientation towards having positive expectations and predictions about their life in general, as compared to pessimists who have a tendency to expect negative future outcomes in life (Carver et al., 2010).

Optimism as an explanatory style' or Learned optimism model by Martin Seligman 90). Explanatory style is defined as the manner in which an individual explains the events of his/ her life, making attributions for their causes. Attributions can be made on the three dimensions: internality/externality, instability/stability and specificity/ globality.

Bryan, et, al, 2024 conducted a study to examine associations among life satisfaction, perceptions of life being worthwhile, happiness, negative affect, and suicidal ideation. Preliminary evidence suggests different dimensions of subjective well-being (SWB) may be differentially associated with reduced suicide risk when measured at the person versus group level. In this longitudinal study, 2055 military personnel and civilian government employees completed self-report surveys administered 6 times from January 2020 to November 2021. Generalized estimating equation (GEE) models were used to examine associations among life satisfaction, perceptions of life being worthwhile, happiness, negative affect, and suicidal ideation. At the participant level, life satisfaction and worthwhile life were significantly correlated with reduced suicidal ideation whereas negative affect was significantly correlated with increased suicidal ideation. At the unit level, happiness was significantly correlated with reduced suicidal ideation. When covarying for participant-level depression and hopelessness, participant-level life satisfaction was no longer statistically significant. Results suggest eudaimonic SWB may be protective at the individual level whereas hedonic SWB may be protective at the group level.

Kaushik, et, al, (2024) Examining the impact of optimism and well-being among police personnel. This study delves into the complex relationship between optimism and work-life balance, among police personnel, emphasizing the critical role of psychological factors in improving their effectiveness and well-being. Given the escalating demands on police officers in today's society, it's crucial to examine factors affecting job satisfaction, productivity, and stress levels. The research seeks to gather comprehensive data from police officers to understand how optimism and perceptions of work-life balance impact various aspects of. Structured surveys will quantitatively assess individual optimism levels, work-life balance perceptions, and self-reported indicators. The study posits that police officers with higher optimism levels will demonstrate greater job satisfaction and overall well-being compared to less optimistic peers. The findings of this research hold significant implications for academia and practice alike. By illuminating the psychological mechanisms underlying job satisfaction, stress management, and performance optimization within law enforcement agencies, the study offers actionable insights for organizational policies, training initiatives, and interventions aimed at improving the well-being and effectiveness of police personnel.

López-Rodríguez, et, al, 2024 conducted a study with objectives to describe and analyse the hashtags, the accounts mentioned, and the main topics of the post. Military organizations have adapted to the logic and dynamics of social media to transmit their institutional narratives. Instagram is the most popular social network, but one of the most understudied in relation to the Armed Forces. This research note presents a comparative study of the content of the official accounts of the Spanish, French, the United States, Israeli, and Australian armies throughout 2021 ($n = 1,922$). The specific objectives are to describe and analyse the hashtags, the accounts mentioned, and the main topics of the post. Results show that armies can convey multiple messages in a single post, and reveal that armies make similar use of Instagram, notwithstanding the various differences between Israel and the other armies due to organizational and contextual elements.

Lester, et, al, 2022 conducted a study to examine prediction of affective well-being to work performance in the United States Army. We found that high positive affect (PA), low negative affect (NA), and high optimism predicted awards for performance and heroism in a sample of 908,096 U.S. Army soldiers (mean age 29.60 years old, $SD = 9.16$ years; with over $\frac{1}{4}$ of a million ethnic minorities and over 150,000 women). Baseline high PA, low NA, and high optimism predicted awards over a four-year follow up window, in which 114,443 soldiers (12.60%) received an award. Each well-being variable predicted future awards for both women and men, for enlisted soldiers as well as officers, for several ethnicities, for varying levels of education, and controlling for a number of other potential explanatory variables. The effects of high positive and low negative affect were additive, with each predicting significantly beyond the other. Comparing the soldiers highest vs. lowest in well-being predicted an almost fourfold greater award recognition in the high group. Awards were predicted by both high and low arousal positive emotions, as well as low sadness and low anger. The relations between PA, NA, and optimism with award attainment were curvilinear, with the greatest difference in award attainment occurring between low and moderate levels of affective well-being, with little effect between moderate and high well-being.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Operational Definitions

- Happiness- It can be defined as the score obtained from the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, a 29-item self-report scale. Respondents rate statements about their emotional well-being and life satisfaction on a 6-point scale, with higher scores indicating greater happiness. The score ranges from 29 to 174, with higher scores reflecting a higher level of happiness.
- Optimism- it could be measured using the *Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R)*, a 10-item questionnaire where respondents indicate their general tendency to expect positive outcomes. It could be measured by assessing the frequency of positive future expectations reported by participants in response to hypothetical situations.
- Social media- a self-report measure that assesses the frequency and intensity of an individual's engagement with social media platforms by using social media use scale. Higher scores indicate greater levels of social media use.

Objective of the study

1. To assess the relationship between use of social media and happiness among military personnel.
2. To assess the relationship between optimism and happiness in military personnel.

Hypothesis of the study

H1- There would be a significant relationship between Optimism and happiness.

H2- There would be a significant relationship between use of social media and happiness.

Variables

Dependent Variable- Happiness

Independent Variable- Optimism and social media

Selection of sample

The sample size will consist of 60 participants who will be selected on the basis of random sampling. Participants will be aged between 25 to 40 years adults, only military personnel included in the study.

Instruments of the study

- **The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ)**- It has been derived from the Oxford Happiness Inventory, (OHI) developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University. The OHI comprises 29 items, each involving the selection of one of four options that are different for each item. It is a six- point Likert scale.
- **The Social Media Use Scale (SMUS)**- The SMUS was developed by Lin, Wang, and Chen (2016) based on the Uses and Gratifications theory (UGT) (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). The SMUS includes 22 items, divided into five dimensions: social interaction, entertainment, information seeking, convenience, and social comparison. Each item is scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often).
- **LIFE ORIENTATION TEST –Revised (LOT-R)**- It is a revised version of the original LOT (Scheier & Carver, 1992;) A 10-item measure of optimism versus pessimism. Of the 10 items, 3 items measure optimism, 3 items measure pessimism, and 4 items serve as fillers. Respondents rate each item on a 4-point scale

Procedure of data collection

The participants will inform about the purpose of the research beforehand and their consent will also be obtained. Proper instructions provided to them and told them that results will be utilized only for educational and research purpose. The psychological tools necessary for the research will be sent to them via Google forms. Research will be done fairly. Anonymity and confidentiality of results at each step will be assured to them.

Research Design

Correlational research design was used. The relationship between use of social media, optimism, and happiness was investigated using a correlation method.

Statistical analysis

The scores were analysed with the help of general statistical measures of mean and standard deviation. Along with this, Pearson's Co-efficient of Correlation was taken out to examine the relationship between the variables.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Pearson Correlation was used to investigate the relationship between the variables.

Table: correlational analysis of variables (happiness, Optimism, social media)

Variables	r
Happiness	1
Optimism	.321**
Social media	.250*

Results shows that there was a significant positive relationship between happiness and optimism ($r=.321^{**}$, $p<0.01$) military personnel with high optimism have more happiness. Thus, we can say that higher level of optimism is related with higher level of happiness. This indicates that optimism predicts happiness, and this finding is consistent with the studies by Genc, et, at.,2021 This study aimed to examine the mediating role of optimism and hope on the relationship between coronavirus stress and subjective wellbeing among young adults in Turkey. A sample of 331 ($M= 20.86$ and 64% females) college students participated in this study. The results demonstrated that coronavirus stress was negatively associated with the college students' sense of hope and optimism. Optimism and hope mitigated the adverse impacts of stress on well-being during the pandemic. These results indicated that young adults with a high level of stress due to coronavirus have lower optimism and hope, which in turn have less subjective well-being. The study findings hence highlight that being hopeful and optimistic are the potential resources to explain how coronavirus stress is related to subjective well-being. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and our first hypothesis that There will be a significant relationship between Optimism and happiness is accepted here.

Results of social media use shows that there was a positive relationship between happiness and social media ($r=.250^{*}$, $p<0.05$) military personnel with high social media use have more happiness. Thus, we can say that higher level of social media is related with higher level of happiness. Studies by Marengo, et, at.,2021 used objective behavioural data to examine the hypotheses that receiving Likes on Facebook would relate to 1) users' level of perceived self-esteem, and 2) increased happiness via the mediating role of self-esteem. We found that frequency of users updating their profile and sharing personal content had a direct effect on the frequency and intensity of the feedback (i.e., Likes) they received from other users in their online social network. Additionally, analyses supported a positive link between the frequency and intensity of positive feedback received by users and perceived happiness that was mediated in part by an increase in self-esteem. Overall, findings demonstrate a process linking positive online social feedback and perceived well-being. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and our second hypothesis that There will be a significant relationship between social media and happiness is accepted here.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

