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Designing a Model to Promote Happiness in High School Students

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ABSTRACT: The main purpose of this study was to identify the pattern of promoting happiness in high school students. The method of study was qualitative research via Grounded theory. This grounded theory study explored the pattern of promoting happiness in high school students. Based on it, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 experts and specialists who were selected by theoretical sampling method. To ensure the validity of the research, we used the members checking (interviewees) and triangulation (faculty members) and to calculate the reliability of the coding method, the methods of inter-subject agreement (agreement between two coders) and Kendall agreement formula were used that coefficient of 0.78 was obtained, which is in the favorite range. In order to analyze the data obtained from the interview, thematic analysis method was used. After reaching theoretical saturation, the dimensions and components of happiness promotion in schools were extracted and the pattern of happiness promotion in high school students was identified. Findings revealed that the model of promoting happiness in high school students include two dimensions, internal and external. In the internal dimension, the main categories of the model include: characteristics of students, characteristics of teachers, characteristics of principals, teaching methods, communication and interactions, activities, actions and educational programs of the school, organizational factors and physical space and equipment. In the internal dimension, the main categories include family factors and social factors.

Keywords: Happiness, High school students, Qualitative research.

Introduction

Happiness is a scientific name for evaluating people's lives. People generally judge their life (life satisfaction or feeling satisfied) based on their recent emotional feelings about what happened to them (pleasant and unpleasant emotions) (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999). Oishi, Graham, Kesebir, and Galinha (2013) considered happiness to be the satisfaction at the level of pleasure. Glatzer (2006) interpreted happiness as the evaluation of life events and satisfaction with its various events. Happiness is an emotional state characterized by feelings of happiness, satisfaction, contentment and satisfaction. While happiness has different definitions, it is often described as involving positive emotions and life satisfaction (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008; Wong & Bowers, 2019). In general, it should be said that no matter how happiness is defined, research shows that happiness is a very desirable thing and creating vitality is one of the most effective ways to increase mental health in society (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2008). With the joy and vivacity of life becoming meaningful, the

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possibility of self-improvement is provided for adolescents and young people, and this group can easily go through the steps of progress**.**

Society is dynamic when there are many happy elements. Vitality and vivacity in schools cause growth and prosperity in all dimensions of existence. Happy people have their lives under control; they are responsible and purposeful; they have a positive outlook on life; and they do not give up on any difficulties (Steptoe, 2019).

The school as an institution can make the community as fresh as possible by creating contexts and programs. If there is a desire to live in school, it will automatically affect the society. The school, as the most important place for the presence of future generations, should be a healthy and dynamic environment (Buss, 2000). Talebzadeh and Samkan (2011) provided a conceptual model for creating happiness in Iranian elementary schools through review of literature and previous studies and indicated four major categories namely: physical, social-emotional, individual and instructional factors. Each person spends more than 12 years of their life in a school environment and contacts with peers in these important years, and his/her physical, mental and social development occurs especially during his/her childhood and adolescence. Behaviors and attitudes of teachers and other students, and their relationships in school and even the facilities and physical space of the school have an undeniable effect on identity, talent development, academic achievement, physical and mental health, and happiness (Gokler, Gurgan, & Tastan, 2015).

Buss (2000) studies showed that many factors could be involved in school rejuvenation. Among them, we can mention the cheerful principal and teacher, an invigorating physical atmosphere, healthy and clean classrooms, a suitable atmosphere for learning and holding joyful ceremonies. However, the field of school refreshing factors referred to the role of socio-cultural factors which rejuvenated schools and provided a healthy environment for students to learn better. Schoch (2006) researched four factors of happiness and its relationship with religious commitment and found that religious commitment was a predictor of happiness. Myers (1992) stated that scientific and cultural development, education, art and mass media, entertainment, and leisure were sources and factors of happiness which has psychological, physical, social, and cultural aspects. Nasohi Dehnavi, Ahmadi, and Abedi (2004) indicated that the factors related to happiness could be divided into the following five categories: physical condition, managerial style, teachers, school relations, and educational facilities. Kim (2019) in a study examined the mediating effect of optimism on the relationship of middle school students' stress and happiness at school and indicated that enhancing optimism is an effective strategy for improving the happiness at school.

Some studies have also addressed the role of family environment on adolescent happiness (López-Ruiz, Huete-Alcocer, Alfaro-Navarro, & Nevado-Peña, 2021; Nes, Czajkowski, & Tambs, 2010). Fararouei, Brown, Toori, Haghighi, and Jafari (2013) indicated that happiness was associated with lower BMI, regular physical activity, absence of exposure to second-hand smoke, higher consumption of fruits and vegetables, and spending leisure time with family.

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Given the importance of vitality and vivacity in school, apparently it is necessary to pay serious attention to this fundamental issue, especially in junior high schools, because motivating factors in schools lead to the formation of desirable skills and attitudes in the field of social education. A lively environment facilitates and enhances learning (Kazemianpour & Ghorchian, 2018). Research has also shown that a school that is more lively and happy has a higher quality and efficiency. If the school is static, sad and boring, students learn jealousy and resentment instead of joy and freshness, kindness and love. In a dynamic school, life expectancy, success and curiosity, academic joy and freshness motivate and fulfill the natural talents and needs and future requirements of students. Therefore, the vitality of schools, especially high schools in Iran is very important because if a person is not happy in childhood and adolescence, he/she may suffer from psychological problems at a young age. Given that high school students can play an important role in the future of the country, if a country wants to achieve scientific and technological progress, it is necessary to pay special attention to the stage when the main character of the person is formed. The establishment of happy and cheerful schools with quality in education depends on various factors, including principals, teachers, students, and appropriate educational facilities and equipment. These factors affect the form of pre-planned curriculum and training (formal curriculum) or hidden curriculum and informal relationships. Therefore, one of the important factors in the prosperity of these students is the discussion of their vitality in the school environment. So, it is necessary for the country's education to pay more attention to this field so that its people are happy and prosperous. Accordingly, this study sought to design a model to promote happiness in junior high schools.

Material and Methods

The method of study was qualitative research via Grounded theory. This grounded theory study explored the pattern of promoting happiness in high school students. Based on it, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 experts and specialists who were selected by theoretical sampling method. To ensure the validity of the research, we used the members checking (interviewees) and triangulation (faculty members) and to calculate the reliability of the coding method, the methods of inter-subject agreement (agreement between two coders) and Kendall agreement formula were used that coefficient of 0.78 was obtained, which is in the favorite range. In order to analyze the data obtained from the interview, thematic analysis method was used. After reaching theoretical saturation, the dimensions and components of happiness promotion in schools were extracted and the pattern of happiness promotion in high school students was identified. In order to analyze the data obtained from the interview, thematic analysis method was used and these steps were followed: 1) Familiarity with the data 2) Creation of basic codes 3) Search for topics 4) Review of topics 5) Definition and naming of topics, 6) Preparation of reports. In order to analyze the data obtained from the interviews, the text of the interviews was read frequently so that the researchers gained a relative mastery of all the interviews and became familiar with the concepts and meanings hidden in the interview texts. Then, the initial codes were identified manually by reviewing the interviews. This process was in the form of

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underlining words that researchers identified as the source code. This was done continuously to identify ignored code in the early stages. Then similar codes and concepts that referred to a specific field or topic were placed in a category. At this point, the researchers reciprocally categorized the codes that referred to a common theme and placed them in a class. In the next step, the different classes were reviewed, and by defining and reviewing the common nature that existed within the classes, the appropriate name for the classes was considered, which is known as the theme. In fact, at this stage, the researchers defined a specific and comprehensive name for it based on the common meanings that existed between the codes of a class. Finally, according to the identified themes, the researchers modeled the conceptual framework of the research in terms of dimensions and components.

Results

In order to identify the components of the research, first, the verbal propositions in the interviews were identified. Then, the same codes were placed in a category. Table 1 shows the main categories, subcategories, and concepts identified related to promoting happiness in junior high schools.

Table 1. Main categories, subcategories, and concepts identified related to promoting happiness in high school students

Dimensions	Main categories	Subcategories	Identified concepts
Internal dimensions	Characteristics of students	Physiological and physical dimension	Physical-physiological changes-adolescent individuality and...
		Cognitive and psychological dimension	Mental health, social change, increasing hope, trust, motivation, etc..
		Student knowledge and awareness	Teaching teenagers to give up fleeting happiness - Awareness of the process of change
		Student experience and background	Student-student failure experience and learning style
	Characteristics of teachers	Teacher knowledge and awareness	Understanding the mental and psychological conditions of students - teachers' familiarity with psychological science.
		The type of behavior, actions and expectations of the teacher	Appropriate expectations and behaviors with adolescents - valuing curious and questioning students, active and
		Teacher recruitment, training and empowerment	Skills training-training method-using specialized trainers and...
	Features of managers	The type of behavior, actions, and programs of the manager	Non-discrimination and observance of justice - respectful relations and giving freedom of action and non-strictness and...
	Teaching methods	Use of new teaching methods	Using up-to-date and modern teaching methods and...
		appropriateness of teaching methods	Appropriate teaching methods
	content	Functional, engaging, and relevant content	Attractive, functional, and enjoyable content
	School communication and interaction space	Existence of appropriate communication space between school stakeholders	Students' involvement in current school affairs - friendly and respectful interaction with students and...
	School activities, activities and educational	Actions and activities	Joyful and enjoyable programs at school-reducing teaching hours
		Training and advice	Cognitive and motivational process training -

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	programs		training social, communication and sense of cooperation skills
	Organizational factors	Information and awareness of school staff about the concepts and necessity, status and effects of happiness	Happiness Positive emotion in the present Satisfaction with the past - Optimism about the future - Happiness is an inner thing
		Policies, programs and actions	Community attention to the needs of adolescents-Planning for a better future-Attention planners
	Physical space and equipment	Qualitative physical space and convenient equipment	Beautification of the building, space and school environment, school health and...
External dimensions	Family factors	Communications and interactions	Communicating with parents - consulting the participation of students' families to create a happy and creative environment and...
		Provide a suitable environment	Effective family interactions - providing the possibility of happiness - a safe and reassuring environment and family, etc.
		Family features	Number of children, family dimensions, family social class, parents' education, etc.
		Family plans and activities	Understanding and recognizing needs by parents - Less commands and prohibitions - Family attention to adolescent happiness - Adolescent guidance in the family environment and...
	social factors	Community attention to the importance and community need for happiness	Communication and acceptance of adolescents - Recognition of adolescent needs in society - Identification of adolescents and their needs and ...
		Communication and social interactions for happiness	Children's relationship with others-Intimacy and mutual understanding-Healthy and intimate relationship-Popularity between friends and...
		The state of society in various dimensions (economic, cultural, etc.)	Social-economic factor-appropriate social environment-attention to cultural issues and...

The results of this study exhibited that the model of promoting happiness in schools includes two dimensions: internal and external. In the external dimension, the following nine main categories were identified: Characteristics of students, characteristics of teachers, features of managers, teaching methods, content, school communication and interaction space, school activities, actions and educational programs, organizational factors, and physical space and equipment.

In the internal dimension, the first category was family factors and the second one was social factors. The proposed model for promoting happiness in junior high schools is presented in the Figure 1.

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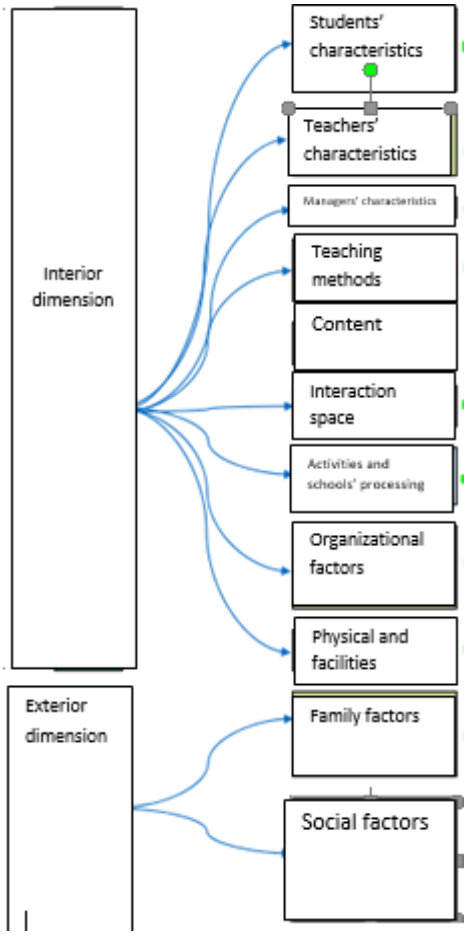

Figure 1. Conceptual model of promoting happiness in junior high schools

In the external dimension, the first main category of the model for promoting happiness in schools was the characteristics of students, and it included the following sub-categories: The first component of this category was the "physiological and physical component" in this field, according to experts; physiological changes in high school in the dimensions of physical and gender changes that were affected by age, puberty and gender, occurred in this period. In this course, special attention should be paid to gender differences and age conditions, as well as individual differences, especially in educational design and in-school planning. In this course, special attention should be paid to the special characteristics of students such as age and puberty. Sports and physical activities were one of the recommendations in this field. The second component of this category was "cognitive and psychological component". In this regard, according to experts, the situation of students in high school was sensitive, and since happiness was partly affected by individual dimensions and psychological factors, it was important to pay attention to individual differences in this course. Students should have a sense of usefulness, self-efficacy, maintaining value, self-efficacy, increasing hope, confidence and motivation, not being afraid of failure and increasing self-confidence. Students should have an inner sense of well-being, an inner motivation to respect to feel safe. In fact, mental health in this period was highly recommended due to psychological changes and the formation of a person's identity in

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adolescence and the sensitivity of adolescents to their appearance and the attention and approval need of the opposite sex in this period. In the process of happiness, the focus shifted from physical pleasures to inner happiness. Overall, change should ultimately lead to increased hope, security, peace, trust and motivation in students. The third component of this category was "the student knowledge and awareness". In this regard, according to experts, we should know that the factors leading to happiness were different, and the role of this factor was different in people at different ages and genders. We should increase students' knowledge and awareness in this field by providing books and discussing controversial and intellectual topics. Adolescents needed to acquire the necessary awareness to give up fleeting joys and move towards cognitive and inner pleasures. The fourth component of this category was "the student experience and background". In this regard, according to experts, past positive and negative experiences that could be an effective factor in knowledge happiness.

The second category of the happiness promotion model in schools (In the external dimension), was the characteristics of teachers, which included the following sub-categories**:**

The first component of this category was the "dimension of teacher knowledge and awareness" by being influential in behavior and actions. The second component of this category was the " actions and expectations of the teacher". In this regard, according to experts, the type of behavior, actions, and expectations of a teacher in dealing with students as adolescence could be very important. The teacher should have appropriate expectations and behaviors with students, and they should pay more attention to curious, questioning, and active students. The teacher's relationship with the students should be one of love and intimacy. It should give students more freedom of action, make them creative in their work, and involve students in teaching; even the type and manner of the teacher is effective in this regard. The third component of this category was the "teacher recruitment, education, and empowerment". In this regard, according to experts in attracting teachers, educating and empowering them, the issue of students' happiness should be considered. In this regard, using specialized teachers for more active participation of students in festivals was one of the solutions**.**

The third category of the model of promoting happiness in schools (in the external dimension) is the characteristics of principals, which include the category, type of behavior, actions and programs of the principal. To promote happiness in schools, the characteristics of principals must be considered. The main component of this category is the component of the manager's type of behavior, actions and plans. The type of behavior and actions of the principal such as having friendly relations, respecting students, giving freedom of action and not being strict in enforcing school rules, giving students private space and not interfering in privacy, strengthening constructive and positive behaviors in students, organizing factors that create happiness in school, relying on democratic techniques and reducing hierarchical relationships in school administration, following the right and principled programs in school can help promote happiness in students**.**

The fourth category of the model for promoting happiness in schools (in the external dimension) was teaching and learning methods, which included the following components. The first component of this category was “the use of new teaching methods". The use of various new and up-to-date methods in

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education could reduce students' learning concerns and promote effective happiness**.** The second component of this category was "the attractiveness and appropriateness of teaching methods". Therefore, using appropriate teaching methods appropriate to the type of content, students 'age level, their learning power, conditions, facilities, time, etc. could play a role in promoting students' happiness**.**

The fifth category (in the external dimension) was the "content" which included the following components**.** The main component of this category was "practical, attractive and relevant content". Distributing appropriate books with practical and engaging content and controversial topics can play a role in students' happiness**.**

The sixth category (in the external dimension) was the school communication and interaction space, which includes the following components. The main component of this category is "the existence of a suitable communication space between school stakeholders". A suitable, sincere, and committed communication space should be provided between school stakeholders and appropriate interactions should be provided in this space; Students should be actively involved in the current affairs of the school and treated with respect. A dynamic, participatory and lively culture should be formed in the school. In this regard, the development of appropriate programs to strengthen, encourage and involve students, especially in decision-making and doing some things that lead to a sense of usefulness is necessary. If the programs and interactions that are prepared in the school are done using new communication methods, provides the ground for the growth of communication and interaction in the school environment, and the right and responsible treatment of students, leads to the promotion of happiness in students**.**

The seventh category (in the external dimension) was the activities, actions, and educational programs of the school, which include the following components. The first component of this category was the "actions and activities". Actions and activities were performed in the school environment, the amount and quantity of which could be effective in students' happiness. Numerous celebrations, festivals, competitions, showing and promoting positive and useful works of students, holding sports and art classes and competitions along with paying attention to, lawful, invigorating, small joys, as well as the use of facilitating technologies and accelerating students 'learning and even reducing teaching hours or performing fun programs as an interest for educational programs, could play a role in students' happiness**.** The second component of this category was the "education and counseling". To create happiness in students, we needed to provide some education and did some counsel. Teaching social and communication skills, teaching how to build trust and self-esteem, etc. could play an effective role in students' happiness at the same time. Providing specialized counseling services and having a counseling approach can help solve the problems in the way of students' happiness**.**

The eighth category (in the external dimension) was organizational factors, which included the following components. The first component of this category was "the knowledge and awareness of school staff about the concepts and necessity, status and effects of happiness". Knowledge and awareness of school staff about the concepts and necessity of happiness and awareness of the status

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and effects of happiness could play an important role in the performance of school staff. Happiness was a multidimensional concept, and it was considered as an internal matter; it referred to the interpretation of events and happenings as well as positive emotion in the present and people's satisfaction with the past; it was optimism about the future and reflected in individual collective behaviors. The second component of this category was the "policies, programs, and actions of school". Policies, programs, and actions to create happiness covered a wide range. At the macro level, the needs of adolescents must be addressed, the government's ideological and religious view of the school must be reformed, and the planning for graduate employment in government documents must be considered. In this regard, the role of the media in creating hope and promoting students' mental health can be effective.

The ninth category (in the external dimension) was the physical space and equipment, which includes the following component. The main component of this category was "physical space and appropriate equipment". According to the interviewees, physical space and equipment, considering the hygienic principles, beautification of school buildings, considering the psychological principles for physical design of classrooms and schools, providing a suitable recreational space for students can be effective in students' happiness.

In the internal dimension of the happiness promotion model in schools, the first category was family factors, which included the following components. The first component of this category was "communication and interaction". The type of communication and interaction that governed the relationship between children and parents could help promote happiness in students. Giving a chance to the adolescent in the family and involving him in decisions and activities at home, the prevailing intimacy in the family and the form of attitudes, as well as paying attention to communication and respect for privacy in the family could be effective in students' happiness**.** The second component of this category was "preparing the right environment". The third component of this category was "family characteristics". Family characteristics such as the number of children, family social class, parents 'education, and other dimensions of the family were other effective components in students' happiness**.** The fourth component of this category was "family plans and actions". Being aware of the age and needs of the adolescent, giving a private space to adolescents and the lack of strict control over them, proper verbal communication between family members, family games, etc. play an effective role in student happiness.

In the internal dimension of the happiness promotion model in schools, the second category was social factors, which included the following components. The first component of this category was "society's attention to the importance and society's need for happiness". Community attention to the importance and need for happiness is another effective component in students' happiness. Society must recognize the needs of adolescents, communicate effectively with adolescents, believe in their cognitive ability, and have appropriate expectations of them. The second component of this category was "communication and social interactions in the line with happiness". Communication and social interactions in the line with happiness were another component of the social factor in promoting

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students' happiness. The conditions and context for the correct, logical, and dignified expression of adolescents' emotions should be provided. Adolescents needed to gain positive experiences and learning through peer groups and intimacy and mutual understanding should be formed between them. The social environment should guide teenagers to the right and logical path. The third component of this category is "the status of society in various dimensions (economic, cultural, etc.)". The status of society in various dimensions of socio-economic and cultural has an effective role in student happiness; In other words, students' happiness is affected by the overall performance of society in various dimensions; Existence of poverty and misery in the society and psychological and social insecurity can be a foundation for unhappiness, violence, dropouts, addiction, unemployment.

Discussion

The present study aimed to provide the model of promoting happiness in high school students. Our findings exposed that the model of promoting happiness in high school students include two dimensions, internal and external. In the internal dimension, the main categories of the model include: characteristics of students, characteristics of teachers, characteristics of principals, teaching methods, communication and interactions, activities, actions and educational programs of the school, organizational factors and physical space and equipment. In the internal dimension, the main categories include family factors and social factors. The results are in line with previous studies (Csikszentmihalyi & Wong, 2014; Gokler et al., 2015; Kim, 2019; Nasohi Dehnavi et al., 2004). In these studies, the factors affecting happiness in students are mainly referred to as internal and external factors. For example, in Csikszentmihalyi and Wong (2014) research, personal and institutional determinants of happiness have been identified.

Another important point in the findings of the present study is the role of the family and its dynamics in students' happiness. This part of the findings is consistent with the North, Holahan, Moos, and Cronkite (2008) and Gray, Chamratrithirong, Pattaravanich, and Prasartkul (2013) studies. For instance, Gray et al. (2013) has shown that family factors are more important than non- family factors in explaining the variations in adolescents' happiness. Regarding the family domain, adolescents who reported sufficient time spent with family members and highest level of love and connectedness were happiest.

Totally, the findings of the present study support the role of individual, family, social and educational factors in students' happiness. Future research can promote happiness in adolescent students by designing interventions based on the findings of the present study. This study has several limitations. Due to the limited total number of participants in the interview group, generalization of findings should be done with caution and the future studies should be repeated with larger samples. Furthermore, since the target group is only high school students in this study, the primary school students remains to be further confirmed in upcoming studies.

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