

Examining the relationship between social capital and happiness among faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine the relationship between social capital and happiness among faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences. The study was descriptive-analytic conducted through cross-sectional design. The population was all faculty members of the Urmia University of Medical Sciences. The sample size was determined 151 using Cochran formula by proportionate stratified sampling. Data collection was through two questionnaires applied in previous studies whose validity and reliability were studied and confirmed in this study. Data analysis was through SPSS19. According to the findings, the social capital and happiness of faculty members in Urmia University of Medical Sciences was higher than average. The results also indicated a positive and significant relationship between social capital and its relational, cognitive, and structural aspects with happiness among faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences. Thus, social capital and its aspects are among the factors improvement of whose increases the happiness of the faculty members.

Keywords: Social capital, Happiness, Faculty members, Urmia University of Medical Sciences.

Introduction

As one of the most critical psychological requirements of mankind, happiness is among the positive emotions placed against negative emotions such as depression and anxiety ^[1]. According to the psychologists, happiness has two aspects: objective (due to tangible circumstances such as financial, welfare, conjugal life, education, and job) and subjective (due to internal states and cultural and social components) (Hills and Arjil, 2001, quoted by Kiamarhi and Momeni, 2013 ^[2]). Many appraise subjective aspect, especially the role of social capital, much more important ^[1]. Studies indicate that from the late

twentieth century, one of the problems of today's societies is neglecting happiness and vitality, and thus increased mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression, so happiness has been studied as an important issue ^[3]. According to one of the recent polls of Gallup Foundation, Iran ranks the second among the saddest countries. Regarding happiness, Iran ranked 77th among 151 countries in 2012 and ranked 105th among 140 countries in 2016 ^[4]. The results of domestic studies, including Abbaszadeh et al. (2012) indicate that 39.3% of people have a moderate level of happiness, 35.4% describe their happiness low, and only 3% see themselves as extremely happy. Meanwhile, West Azarbaijan with Urmia as the center is at the bad level. One of the most important points here is how to achieve happiness and strengthen it and the factors affecting achieving this vital need where social capital can play a critical role ^[1, 2, 5].

Studies have indicated that happy people have less burnouts, emotional exhaustion, and have fewer absences. They are also less likely to leave their jobs, and happier employees are more committed to the organization ^[6]. As today many organizations, including universities, have a low level of trust, closed

Access this article online

Website: www.japer.in

E-ISSN: 2249-3379

How to cite this article: Mohammad Osman Hosseinbor, Rostam Nabizadeh. Examining the relationship between social capital and happiness among faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences. *J Adv Pharm Edu Res* 2019;9(S2):131-137.

Source of Support: Nil, Conflict of Interest: None declared.

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communication and over-formality, they suffer organizational identity and collective participation^[7]. As a key factor in the social, economic, cultural and political development of human societies, without dedicated and expert human resources universities will not be able to meet the growing needs of their communities^[8]. Putnam sees social capital as the missing link in explaining the development of societies. Social capital, as a source for achieving goals, eases the running of group and social projects^[9]. Social capital has been known as the panacea of social anxiety, and its surplus makes the society healthier, richer and its being high makes society healthier, wealthier, wiser, or at least more tolerant. Managers or people able to create a social capital in the organization pave the way for their career and organizational success. Social capital makes the life meaningful and more enjoyable^[10]. Social capital, like other capitals, brings about a platform for access to opportunities and goals of life and is one of the main sources of organizational and social success. In the present age, managers need social capital to develop more than they require physical and human capital. Organizations usually hire managers believing in social capital and they have this capital themselves because people with higher social capital can solve more difficult problems^[11]. Given the responsibility of medical universities in public health and the central role of faculty members in these universities, as well as their high status in the hierarchy of socio-economic bases in society, the fundamental question of this paper is as follows. "What is the relationship between social capital and its aspects with happiness of the faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences?"

Theoretical basics and research background

Social capital

Social capital is among the concepts used today in sociology and economics and recently in management and organization. In the same vein, Wollock believes that social capital - as a common theoretical language - could be utilized by political scientists, sociologists anthropologists and economists enabling them to work together in a beneficial situation^[12]. Coleman defines social capital regarding its function. Accordingly, "social capital is part of the social structure at the disposal of individuals to achieve their goals. In fact, social capital creates a common ground for members and individuals in social relationships to reach their desired benefit using it (Coleman, 1988, quoted by Soumyananda, 2008^[13]). In other words, Coleman believes that social capital shows how social structure of a group could work as a resource for the members of that group. According to Putnam, social capital is expressed in two forms: social participation (membership in organizations) and political participation (voting, pursuing political debates, signing statements, and so on)^[14], and society members can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions and appropriate social participation by having this capital and its various aspects, such as trust and norms. Social capital, like all

other capital, is generative and enables the achievement of certain goals inaccessible otherwise^[15].

With an organizational approach, Nahapiet and Ghoshal classify various aspects of social capital in three categories: cognitive, relational, and structural^[16].

- A. Cognitive element: This part refers to resources bringing about expressions, inferences, interpretations, and systems of common meanings for members of the groups. The most important aspects of this aspect are language, codes and shared accounts.
- B. Structural element: This part is the general pattern of contacts among individuals. This guides the quality of access to individuals and whom. One of the most important aspects of this element is the network relations between individuals and the structure of communication networks.
- C. Relational element: This element of social capital represents the type of personal relationships of individuals that the members of the group establish because of their history of interactions. Trust, norms, requirements, expectations and identity are of the most critical aspects of this element^[17].

Happiness

In Dehkhoda's dictionary, happiness means joy, prosperity, and cheer^[18]. Jean-Jacques Rousseau defines happiness as a balance between desires and subjectivity^[19]. Happiness is composed of at least three components: existence of positive emotions, lack of negative effects, and satisfaction with life. Each of these mentioned components forms an important part of happiness structure. The first two components reflect emotional aspects and are related to happiness and pleasure, whereas the third component is largely cognitive and based on an assessment of the person's current and past lives. The components of happiness and joy of happiness refer to an increase in positive emotions and a decrease in negative emotions; however, there is a relative heterogeneity in the context of the cognitive component of happiness. This component is related to getting the goal by emphasizing life satisfaction and meaning in life^[20].

Review of literature

Nosratinjad et al. (2015) concluded that there is a significant, direct, and positive relationship between social capital and its aspects with happiness. The level of social participation has the strongest relationship with happiness, followed by social trust and social solidarity. Khoshfar et al. (2011) have indicated that from among the aspects of social capital, social relations and social trust increase happiness, and the more the socioeconomic base increases, the higher the happiness of individuals become^[21]. Mirshah Jafari (2002) has indicated that social capital is among the factors greatly affecting happiness^[22]. Findings of Chalabi and Mousavi (2008) indicate that social relations with trust have a determining effect on happiness^[23]. Moreover, in the macro level, there is a positive relationship between social capital and sense of happiness.

Han Sehee (2015) in a study (2008) shows that the social context of neighborliness is very important to find the difference in the happiness of individuals ^[24]. In addition, the level of social relationships affects happiness and volunteering, and the sense of being useful and organizational participation at the neighborhood level has a positive effect on happiness. In a study, using global value scanning data conducted in 2000, Growiec & Growiec (2013) concluded that social networking and social capital had a positive effect on individual happiness ^[25].

Demir and Ozdemir (2010) concluded that friendship quality affects the level of individuals' happiness greatly ^[26]. The results of this study indicated that the reason for the high impact of friendship relation on happiness is the experiences of friends who pave ground to satisfy basic needs. Using the theory of Coleman (1988), Leung et al. (2010) showed that social capital has a meaningful relationship with happiness. Using survey data of the social development trend of 2003, Chang (2009) ^[27] showed the impact of different aspects of social capital (voluntary participation in non-profit organizations, community participation and social trust) on mental happiness.

In a comparative study, Dolan et al. (2008) concluded that social trust has a great effect on happiness ^[28]. Tov & Diener (2008) have shown that happier countries have gained higher scores in generalized social trust social and social participation ^[29]. In their review of their research, Dolan et al. concluded that joining organizations and participation in volunteering are correlated with a wide range of joy. Using a sample of more than 80 countries, Bjornskov (2006) identified a positive relationship between generalized social trust and life satisfaction ^[30]; and on the other hand, the time spent visiting family and friends and talking with neighbors has a positive relationship with happiness. Haller & Halder (2006), Costanza et al. (2007) and Powdthavee (2008) have indicated a significant and positive relationship between social capital and happiness ^[31-33]. Moreover, using international happiness information, Helliwell (2003) shows differences in happiness between and within nations and the impact of different aspects of social capital in explaining these differences.

By summarizing previous studies conducted in various societies, one can state that social capital (in form of friendship, social interactions, social participation and mutual trust at different levels from person to society) could be correlated to happiness of individuals. Thus, happiness as a psychological state can directly or indirectly be influenced by social factors. However, what the present study tries to do is to examine the relationship between social capital and the level of happiness of individuals in a more limited area with less population like the members of the faculty of Urmia University of Medical Sciences.

Theoretical framework

Regardless of the empirical and theoretical studies presented in this paper indicating the effect of social capital on the level of happiness of individuals, from a theoretical and analytical perspective, one can explain the mechanism of the effectiveness of happiness from social capital aspect. As theoreticians, like

Nahapiet and Ghoshal, consider the aspects of social capital composed of structural, relational, and cognitive, one can admit that happiness is strongly influenced by the direct and indirect functions of social capital. Social capital through the development and expansion of the cognitive element (language and its various aspects) provides the basis for the establishment of human relations in society, creating the personal relationships and trust, and thus, the social relations element of communication (communication patterns). These two are of the most important social determinants of happiness, especially if we consider that the cognitive element and the formation of personal relationships are fundamental factors in the creation of social protections, which themselves play a vital role in happiness. In this regard, happiness is greatly a function of social support that individuals gain from their social networks due to their cognitive and interpersonal element. Thus, people who are cognitive and personal relationships receive more social support.

In addition to the indirect impact of social capital on happiness through a cognitive and relational element, the structural element, which is the final product of social capital, has a great effect on happiness. To the thinkers of this field, the structural element exists only in action and through human action and is reused by the actors. Thus, the nine-aspectal the structure is neither a system of cognitive elements and personal relationships, nor a mere set of external structural patterns on activists. Social structure forms social relations in the area of space and time, and social relationships create and reproduce social structures (Giddens quoted from Ritzard, 1998; p. 704 ^[34]). From this view, social capital, with the development of social patterns, provides brings about social interaction more than before - especially if we follow the logic of Habermasian communicative action and note that the essence of communication is important for human beings, human dignity is manifestation through relationship - the importance, and role of social capital in happiness becomes more evident. Thus, Habermas, unlike Marx, finds the essence of man not in work, but in relationship, so communication has a fundamental importance to modern humans ^[35].

Based on what mentioned, the analytical model of research can be shown as follows:

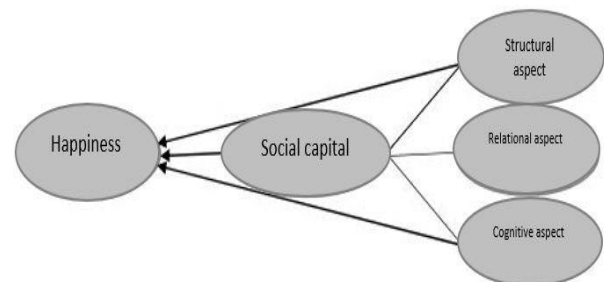


Figure 1: Analytical Model of the Study

Research hypotheses

Given the analytical model, the hypotheses are as follows:

1. Social capital of the faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences is related to their level of happiness.
2. Three aspects of social capital (structural, relational and cognitive) are related to the happiness of the faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences.

Methodology

The present study is a descriptive-analytic research conducted in a cross-sectional design. The research environment was the colleges of Urmia University of Medical Sciences, including faculty of dentistry, medicine, nursing, health, paramedics, and pharmacy. The statistical population was all faculty members (250 people) working in these colleges in Spring 2014. The sample size was calculated 151 people using Cochran formula.

$$n = \frac{nz^2pq}{(N-1)d^2 + z^2pq} = \frac{250 \times 1.96^2 \times \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}}{249 \times 0.05^2 + 1.96^2 \times \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}} = 151$$

The members of the sample were selected by proportional stratified sampling method (based on the ratio of the faculty members of each faculty). Data collection tools were two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was related to organizational social capital, including 15 items of aspects of social capital (structural, relational, and cognitive), obtained according to Nahapiet and Ghoshal's model (1988) [36]. The second questionnaire was Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) with 29 items. These questionnaires measure social capital and happiness of individuals like Likert scale (5 options from very little to very high). In the present study, although standard questionnaires were used to collect data, to verify the validity, face validity (based on the views of three professors) was used with some necessary corrections made to the questions. In addition, for the reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient derived from 30 questionnaires was used in the form of a pre-test (Table 1). Data analysis was performed using Spss 19.

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficient to determine the reliability of variables

Variables	Social capital	Happiness
Cronbach's alpha coefficient	0.89	0.91

Findings

The background and demographic characteristics of respondents

One hundred fifty-one sample members or respondents from among the faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences, in terms of gender (70.2%) were mostly males, in age all were over 30, and the majority (57%) of them were 36-40. In terms of marital status, most (86.1%) of them were married; in terms of education, the majority (64.2%) had a doctoral

degree; in terms of work experience; most of them (90%) have more than more 5 years of work experience; and the majority (37.1%) had 11 to 15 years of work experience.

The status of social capital of the respondents

- In quantitative terms, the average social capital of respondents in the range of 1 to 5 was higher than the average (3.61). The majority (45.7%) of respondents had high social capital and 89% of them have medium-to-very high social capital.
- Among the aspects studied, the relational aspect had a mean of 3.68 and was the highest value and cognitive one with an average of 3.48 had the lowest value. This value was 3.67 for the structural aspect.
- The faculty of health faculty had the highest (3.88) and the faculty members of Paramedical Sciences had the lowest (3.41) social capital. This was 3.83 for dentistry schools, 3.73 for nursing, 3.68 for pharmacies and 3.46 for medicine.

Happiness status of respondents

- In quantitative terms, the happiness of respondents in the range of 1 to 5 was higher than the average (3.56). The majority (52.4%) of respondents had a high degree of happiness and nearly 95% of them have an average to very high level of happiness.
- Among the aspects studied, positive emotion with an average of 3.65% had the highest and life satisfaction had the lowest scores with an average of 3.47%. This value for lack of negative feeling was 3.56.
- The faculty members of the school of health had the highest (3.81) and the faculty members of Paramedical Sciences had the lowest (3.40 average) level of happiness. This value was 3.76 for dentistry school, 3.63 for nursing, 3.47 for pharmacies and 3.45 for medicine faculties. This result is a symmetrical with the social capital status in various faculties. This similarity and symmetry could show the direct relationship between these two variables.

Study of the status of social capital and happiness of faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences

Table 2: Single-sample t-test to examine the status of social capital and happiness

Test value = 3						
Variable	Average	SD	Mean difference	Degree of freedom	T	Sig.
Social capital	3.61	0.574	0.614	150	13.130	0.000
Happiness	3.56	0.496	0.562	150	13.901	0.000

According to the table above, both the mean of social capital and happiness of the faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences are significantly higher than the average (3).

Studying the status of social capital and happiness of faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences in terms of faculties

Table 3: One-way ANOVA test to tests the difference between faculties in terms of social capital and happiness

Variable	ANOVA		Tukey	
	F	Sig.	There is a difference	Sig.
Social capital	4.241	0.001	Health with Paramedicine	0.44
			Health with medicine	0.005
			Dentistry with medicine	0.037
Happiness	4.685	0.001	Health with medicine	0.001
			Dentistry with medicine	0.012

According to the above table, ANOVA test (at a significant level of 0.001) showed that:

- There is a significant difference between in social capital in faculties of Urmia University of medical sciences. Tukey test showed a significant difference between health schools with paramedics, health with medicine, and dentistry with medicine.
- There is a significant difference between the faculties of Urmia University of Medical Sciences in terms of happiness. Tukey test indicated a significant difference between medical and dentistry schools with medicine.

Testing the main hypothesis: Studying the relationship between social capital and happiness in faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences

Table 4: Spearman correlation coefficient for studying the relationship between social capital and happiness in faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Spearman correlation coefficient	Sig.
Social capital	Happiness	0.828	0.000

The above table shows that the main hypothesis of the research was confirmed. Thus, there is a significant and direct relationship between the social capital and the happiness of the faculty members of the Urmia University of Medical Sciences. Thus, with increase in social capital, happiness increases in faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences.

Testing the first sub-hypothesis: studying the relationship between the structural aspect of social capital and happiness among faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences

Table 5: Spearman correlation coefficient for the

relationship between the structural aspect of social capital and the happiness among faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Spearman correlation coefficient	Sig.
Structural aspect	Happiness	0.756	0.000

The above table shows that the first sub-hypothesis of the research was confirmed. Thus, there is a significant and direct relationship between the structural aspect of social capital and the happiness of the faculty members of the Urmia University of Medical Sciences. Thus, with increase in structural aspect, happiness increases in faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences.

Testing the second sub-hypothesis: studying the relationship between the cognitive aspect of social capital and happiness among faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences

Table 6: Spearman correlation coefficient for the relationship between the cognitive aspect of social capital and the happiness among faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Spearman correlation coefficient	Sig.
Cognitive aspect	Happiness	0.710	0.000

The above table shows that the second sub-hypothesis of the research was confirmed. Thus, there is a significant and direct relationship between the cognitive aspect of social capital and the happiness of the faculty members of the Urmia University of Medical Sciences. Thus, with increase in cognitive aspect, happiness increases in faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences.

Testing the third sub-hypothesis: studying the relationship between the relational aspect of social capital and happiness among faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences

Table 7: Spearman correlation coefficient for the relationship between relational aspect of social capital and the happiness among faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Spearman correlation coefficient	Sig.
Relational aspect	Happiness	0.785	0.000

The above table shows that the third sub-hypothesis of the research was confirmed. Thus, there is a significant and direct relationship between the relational aspect of social capital and the happiness of the faculty members of the Urmia University of Medical Sciences. Thus, with increase in relational aspect, happiness increases in faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences.

Multivariate regression analysis of the relationship between social capital aspects and happiness

Stepwise multivariate regression analysis was used to investigate the simultaneous relationships of social capital aspects with happiness of the faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences. According to the significance of the relationship, relational, structural and cognitive aspects were entered into the model, respectively. According to this analysis, three aspects of social capital at a very significant level (0.000) explain 67.6% of the variance of happiness.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings indicated that, opposite to the results of Abbaszadeh et al. (2012), who showed the happiness of the people of West Azerbaijan and its center Urmia bad, the happiness of the faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences was higher than the average. This difference seems to be due to factors such as the socio-economic base. For a closer examination of this, it is suggested that in future research, the relationship between the aspects of the socio-economic base of citizens and their level of happiness be examined precisely. According to the results, the effect of social capital and its aspects on the happiness of the faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences was positive and significant. In other words, the increase in social capital and its aspects increases the happiness of faculty members. The results are consistent with the findings of Haller and Halder's (2006), Costanza et al. (2007), Powdthavee (2008), Leung (2010) and Khoshfar et al. (2013) [14, 21, 31-33]. One of the findings was that from among the aspects of social capital, relational aspect (trust, norms, requirements and identity) has the greatest effect on increasing the happiness of faculty members. This result is consistent with the findings of Dolan et al. (2008), who showed that social trust is strongly related to happiness as an important aspect of social capital [28]. Among other findings was the positive and significant relationship between the structural aspect of social capital and happiness of the faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences. This finding is in line with the results of Khoshfar et al. (2013), and can similarity be explained by the network analysis approach emphasizing the source and tools within social networks, which explains the relationship between social capital and happiness [21]. As access to diverse and varied social connections provides access to diverse sources of support, thereby increases happiness. On the other hand, happiness has a social aspect. This means that the happy person creates a good social relationship with others and thus can receive social support from them. Another result of this research is that the cognitive aspect of social capital is also one of the factors influencing the increase in happiness of faculty members. Therefore, self-evaluation of individuals of their lives and selves, cognitive aspects such as judgment about life satisfaction, emotional aspects such as mood and emotions and social aspects like the love of other humans can increase

happiness. Thus, it can be said that given the confirmation of the relationship between social capital and its three aspects (according to the theory of Nahapiet and Ghoshal) with happiness, the theoretical model used in this study could be a suitable model for investigating the relationship between social capital and happiness, especially in organizations. The last point is that social capital is a manageable phenomenon. This means that it can be rebuilt or based on policy-making in specific areas within the organization and even the community, or in the process of its formation. This is possible if senior managers and policy makers are properly informed about the status of social capital in the organization. Hence, some suggestions are presented as follows consistent with the purpose and results of this study and to promote social capital to increase the level of happiness of faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences:

- Revising organizational structure to promote and enhance intra-organizational trust-building and relations and interactions
- Encouraging and strengthening professional groups, and associations at the university with the voluntary participation of experts and specialists
- Increasing the communication between authorities and faculty members to address their problems
- Horizontalizing the relationships within the organization and benefiting from group work and participatory decision-making to establish and strengthen the development of social capital.

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