

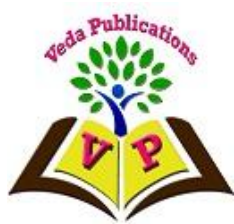
THE 'HAPPINESS CURRICULUM': EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR HOLISTIC EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT



In today's world which is driven by technology and laden with competition, to achieve the best in life, the struggles become hard. What then comes to rescue is education, clubbed with the idea of happiness that remains ever elusive. The 'Happiness Curriculum' launched by the Delhi government focuses on holistic education by including meditation, value education, and mental exercises in conventional education curriculum. This paper attempts to read into the 'humane' aspect of humans as resources in the education sector, taking into consideration, the 'Happiness Curriculum' as a creative method to promote emotional intelligence.

Keywords: *Happiness Curriculum, Emotional Intelligence, Holistic Education, 'Humane' in HR.*

Creativity is considered a major aspect of human mating intelligence (Geher & Miller 2008). While not central to survival in all cases, creative behaviours allow individuals to express details of their particular mental processes, providing windows into several facets of their deeper psychology, such as general intelligence and levels of openness (Kaufman, Kozbelt, Bromley, & Miller 2008). Of the many facets of creativity, humour-related production seems particularly central to relationships (including both intimate and nonintimate relationships). In short, people tend to choose highly humorous individuals compared with less humorous individuals as social partners. Humour production also has an emotional component to it, with the immediate function of such behaviour being to elicit positive affect in others. Thus, humour production conceptually connects with emotional intelligence, a broad suite of psychological abilities that focus on the cognition or emotion interface (Geher 2004). Past research has generally failed to find a significant link between emotional intelligence and markers of creativity (Ivcevic, Brackett, & Mayer 2007). Such past research has not included examined markers of humour production in this realm. Given how central emotional processing and expression are to all facets of humour, we expect emotional intelligence to positively relate to humour production. This research explore the emotional intelligence or humour/happiness production link while examining the Happiness Curriculum.

The curriculum, with a focus on meditation and mental exercise, is designed with the aim to make students not only good humans who will spread happiness but also relaxed professionals who will not indulge in corruption. The daily "Happiness Class," which will last for forty five minutes, will include mindfulness practice, gratitude, morals and value-based stories and activities.

The curriculum was launched for over a thousand government schools to help improve the lives of about eight lakh students studying between Nursery and Class 8. It involves a daily forty five minute happiness class beginning with mindfulness, followed by a story-telling and activities session.

As the class starts, the students will be given five minutes to settle down and pay attention to the happenings around them, which will be a form of mindfulness. A set of 20 stories and 40 innovative activities will form part of the curriculum to train the children to think logically and creatively and understand their role in the social system and nature.

Speaking about the programme, Mr. Manish Sisodia, the Deputy Chief of Delhi said that "the effect of this involving ten lakh students and around fifty thousand teachers can be imagined. It is our belief that the modern day problems like terrorism, corruption, and pollution can be solved through schools and a human-centric education." Sisodia mentioned how the teachers should not be concerned about completing the syllabus. "Do not rush to complete all the stories and activities. The focus should be that the right message sinks in the children," he added.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is defined as the use of thoughts, feelings, and intuition to help solve problems. This also includes one's ability to influence thinking and actions based on an understanding of one's own and others' emotions (Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey 2011; Geher 2004; Mayer & Geher 1996). Several measures of emotional intelligence exist—and generally speaking, these measures have been found to be positively associated with social satisfaction and several other markers of life success (Brackett et al. 2011; Geher, Warner, & Brown 2001). This pattern of findings indicates that there is likely an important connection between one's emotional intelligence and one's skills at handling different social situations. Emotional intelligence has been found to predict such outcomes as successful leadership in multiple domains as well (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough 2009).

A quintessential feature of emotional intelligence is our ability to understand the mental states of others. One study describes this phenomenon as empathic accuracy. It argues that this skill is essential in the way humans relate to each other on a variety of relationship levels (Ickes, Gesn, & Graham 2000). Based on the work of this research, empathic accuracy involves three different levelsof

understanding—empathic understanding, empathic expression, and empathic communication. Each of these is crucial to navigating social situations in ways that are accurate and positive. These facets of emotional intelligence have been found to predict several important life outcomes as well as traits such as openness to experience (Mayer & Salovey 1995).

Creativity and Emotional Intelligence

Creativity has been a historically difficult trait to pin down because of its subjectivity (Roppelt 2014). However, the concept of creativity has still been vastly studied and can be linked to other phenomena in peoples' personality. For instance, a study conducted on humour and creativity found that those who endorsed all kinds of humour (including positive and negative humour) scored higher for creative attitudes than those who only endorsed one or the other type of humour (Chang, Chen, Hsu, Chan, & Chang 2015). Previous research on creativity also has found that various facets of emotional intelligence (e.g., emotional facilitation) may predict markers of creativity (Parke, Seo, & Sherf 2015). This said, the relationship between emotional intelligence and markers of creativity is actually somewhat unclear based on the broader body of past research. In a major set of studies on this topic, (Ivcevic et al. 2007) found that emotional intelligence was, in fact, uncorrelated with markers of emotional creativity, defined as the ability to be creative in expressing emotions (Averill & Thomas-Knowles 1991). Emotional creativity was partly measured, in this study, via a task that asked participants to describe how they would deal with various emotional scenarios and having their responses rated for markers of creativity. These researchers also found that emotional intelligence was uncorrelated with behavioural creativity (based on tasks such as writing a Haiku that was rated for fluidity and other markers of quality).

But what about happiness? Prior studies have been mixed about this, with some studies showing no relationship between individual IQ and happiness, and other studies showing that those in the lowest IQ range report the lowest levels of happiness compared to those in the highest IQ group. In one study, however, the unhappiness of the lowest

IQ range was reduced by 50 percent once income and mental health issues were taken into account. The authors concluded that "interventions that target modifiable variables such as income (e.g., through enhancing education and employment opportunities) and neurotic symptoms (e.g., through better detection of mental health problems) may improve levels of happiness in the lower IQ groups."

Emotional intelligence had a *direct* effect on well-being, and this association remained strong even after controlling for SES. What's more, of the two measures of intelligence—IQ and emotional intelligence—emotional intelligence was the strongest predictor of well-being, outweighing not only IQ, but also a person's SES and age. This finding suggests that emotional intelligence—particularly the capacity to manage one's emotions toward optimal personal goal attainment—is a form of intelligence that can help people live a more fulfilled life regardless of their economic circumstances.

Intelligence matters for a fulfilling life for a number of reasons. For one, a higher IQ is a gateway to better education. Those with higher IQ scores are much more likely to score well on standardized tests of achievement, and academic performance is often the first hurdle necessary to continue up the ladder of occupational opportunities.

Also relevant here is the association between IQ and openness to experience. Those with a higher IQ tend to score higher in a number of facets of openness to experience, including intellectual engagement, intellectual creativity, introspection, ingenuity, intellectual depth and imagination. This tendency for deeper cognitive processing is critical for dealing with a lot of life's up and downs. While trauma is inevitable in life, research shows that we can grow from our traumas if we have a healthy form of rumination in which we reflect on the deeper meaning of the event and can use that cognitive processing to perceive greater opportunities for ourselves and others. Regarding emotional intelligence, since having a fulfilling life often requires accomplishing the goals you have set out for yourself, it makes sense that being able to manage your emotions in the service of a larger goal will be associated with well-being and self-actualization.

Perhaps the most important analysis will turn out to be how IQ and emotional intelligence interact. There is some evidence that in certain contexts, emotional intelligence can amplify the effectiveness of a high IQ, and high emotional intelligence can even compensate for a lower IQ. Future research should definitely look more closely at the interaction between these two important aspects of human intelligence.

Of course, it's possible that the findings operate in reverse causation, and being happier increases intellectual skills. Most likely, both directions are at play in the correlations found in the study. Clearly more research will need to look at the association between intelligence and well-being over time.

All of this sheds important light on the dispositional predictors of creativity. Future research along this same trajectory can help us better understand the relationship between dispositional features of individuals and the nature of human creativity.

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