

# Emotional Abuse in Relation to Hedonic and Eudaimonic Happiness of Young Adults

<sup>1</sup>Anusuya Hazarika, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Pankaj Singh

**ABSTRACT**--Emotional Abuse of young adults is a hidden and pervasive problem that is not well conceptualized nor well measured in our society (O'Connell, 2018). Happiness is a complex construct that concerns optimal experience and functioning. The current research paper considers Happiness from two extremely essential perceptions: The Hedonic approach, in which emphasis is on Happiness in terms of pleasure accomplishment and pain evading; and the Eudaimonic approach, which emphasizes on meaning and self-realization where an individual's life must be fulfilling (Vitterso, Oelmann & Wang, 2009). Thus this paper investigates the impact of Emotional Abuse in relation to Hedonic and Eudaimonic Happiness of young adults of Lovely Professional University in Jalandhar, Punjab. Primary data was collected through standardised psychometric test, to measure their Emotional Abuse (Emotional Abuse Questionnaire) and level of Hedonic (Subjective Well-Being Scale) & Eudaimonic (Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being) Happiness. The results of the present study reveals that there is a negative significant relationship between Emotional Abuse and Hedonic Happiness, meaning if Emotional Abuse is high Hedonic Happiness is low and vice versa. It also infers that Emotional Abuse does significantly predict Hedonic Happiness.

**Keywords**--Emotional Abuse, Hedonic Happiness, Eudaimonic Happiness and Young Adults

## I. INTRODUCTION

The current research study will be focusing mainly on understanding the relationship of the important psychological constructs like Emotional Abuse with Hedonic and Eudaimonic Happiness of Young Adults. Happiness is most essential to human life and development as it is an affective state we feel which leads to well-being of our body, mind and soul (O'Connell, 2018). It is evident that now more than ever that Happiness is important for growth. Economist and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen proposed that the quality of life and a countries citizenry's general well-being must be used as one of the most relevant tools when measuring economic success and growth of any country, especially in those developed and developing countries dealing in socio-economic concerns such as extreme pressure, stress and low productivity (Ray, 2016). We know the overt reasons of low Happiness and should be conferring for the covert reasons. India has the youngest population in the world, 133<sup>rd</sup> country in the UN Happiness index 2018 (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs, 2019) and the lowest divorce rate which might have significant implications. (Perkins, J.M., Lee, H., James, K.S. *et al.*, 2016). This study will try to investigate and shed some light on the covert reasons like emotionally abusive relationships connected to Hedonic and Eudaimonic Happiness. Happiness has mostly been defined as a positive affective state of mind experienced

---

<sup>1</sup> Dept. of Psychology, Lovely Professional University

<sup>2</sup> Dept. of Psychology, Lovely Professional University

by an individual. Emotions such as joyfulness, curiosity, satisfaction, cheerfulness, wellbeing, contentment, as well as less negative emotions, such as sorrow, worry and irritation among other emotions and feelings is said to be Happiness as we all know. Happiness also is about achieving a higher purpose in life; bring in meaning to it, satisfaction and appreciation of small and big moments in life. Hedonia and Eudaimonia are referred to as the pathways to well-being. In order to understand the concept of Happiness, it is important to understand the two main theoretical perspectives that focuses on analysis of the most asked and essential question of today's times as to how and what will make us happy? (Anand, 2016). These two theoretical perspectives are referred to as the Hedonic and Eudaimonic approaches to Happiness. The core of Hedonic well-being is subjective well-being whereas Eudaimonic well-being extracts it's fundamentals from Maslow's self-actualization concept (O'Connell, 2018).

Hedonic is often relative to instant gratification. The concept of Hedonic is not a mere new idea it has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy where renowned Greek philosopher Aristippus, a pupil of Socrates, propounded the concept and meaning of Hedonic in 396 BC approx., theorized achieving highest pleasure as ultimate aim of life (Vitterso, Oelmann & Wang, 2009).

On the other hand Eudaimonic philosophy origins date the period post-Socratic vocabulary utilised to describe ideals that are considered moral in nature. That being said, Eudaimonism essentially overthrows the whole core value of Hedonism whose foremost focus is with a good meaningful life rather than momentary Happiness. Research shows that a balance that is both Hedonia and Eudaimonia Happiness are needed for a fulfilling happy life (Keyes, 2002).

Emotional Abuse doesn't have a simplified direct definition. Commonly, it has been defined as "the systemic destruction of a person's self-esteem and/or sense of safety, often occurring in relationships where there are differences in power and control" by researchers and front line service providers. To define Emotional Abuse more specifically it includes "threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, deprivation of contact, isolation, gaslighting, intimidation and other psychologically abusive tactics and behaviours" (Hunter, Fears, Jones & Rennie, 2018).

Emotional Abuse is said to be one of the most commonly used terms been associated with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) these days. Emotional Abuse is as an attempt to control another person but an Emotional Abuser does not use physical hitting or any physical forms of harm. They use Emotional Abuse as their weapon of choice. It has been evident from other studies that the consequences of Emotional Abuse are not good for the one who is being abused. Emotional Abuse can happen in an intimate relationship, in family and at workplace (Hunter, Fears, Jones & Rennie, 2018). Emotional Abuse could be intentional or unintentional repetitive behaviour pattern over a time period (Hunter, Fears, Jones & Rennie, 2018). Another study had showed that psychological aggression is extremely common and epidemic in dating relationship and marriages which often is normalized and not seen as a problem. Emotional Abuse effects an individual's self-esteem and integrity (Capaldi et al., 2012).

However in recent time's Emotional or Psychological Abuse is studied by researchers as extremely habitual and major form of interpersonal violence which occurs quite consistently in many relationships which now has been established to be extremely harmful for any individual in short and long-term (Tomison & Tucci 1997). Numerous researches claim that sufferers of on-going severe Emotional Abuse experience much greater trauma than from experiencing infrequent physical assault (Williams & Freize, 2005).

## II. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The role of Emotional Abuse with Hedonic and Eudaimonic Happiness is highly relevant for every person, whereas the literature search revealed relatively lack of empirical work on these variables among non-clinical population. Hence, there is a need to examine the relationship and impact of Emotional Abuse on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Happiness of young adult. The findings of the study may contribute to any researches undertaken in future to explore these variables in detail and will pave way for future research in this field.

## III. METHOD

**Participants:**

The sample for the present research consist of a total 30 (N=30) young adults age range 18 – 35 years young adult from Lovely Professional University in Jalandhar, Punjab.

**Tools:**

The following Questionnaires were used for the primary data collection in present research

- Hedonic Happiness – Subjective Well- Being Scale by Diener Ed (2010) two sub-scales. Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) consists of 12-item, 5-point scale. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)-The SWLS, a short 5-item with 7-point Likert scale.
- Eudaimonic Happiness - Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being (QEWB) by Waterman et al., (2010) has 21 items and 5 point scale
- Emotional Abuse – Emotional Abuse Questionnaire by Neil Jacobson, and John Gottman (2010). It has 28 items, 4 point Likert-type scale.

**Procedure:**

The primary data was collected from Lovely Professional University in Jalandhar, Punjab, and purposive sampling method to select the participants was used. The Participants were approached and objectives of the study were explained. The selected participants were administered with above three scales and requested to answer all the items of the questionnaires sincerely and truthfully. The participants were assured that the responses are only for research purpose and will be kept confidential and anonymous.

**Statistical Technique:**

To examine the relationship of Emotional Abuse with Hedonic and Eudaimonic Happiness among participants Pearson's Co-relation method is used. Linear Regression is used to examine the prediction of Emotional Abuse on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Happiness.

## IV. RESULTS

Statistical analysis was done by using Pearson's Co-relation and Linear Regression test. Descriptive Statistics were also calculated which is shown in the Table 1.1. which showed the average age and score of the participants in the three psychometric test that were conducted to study the three variables.

**Table 1.1:** Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Abuse, Hedonic Happiness & Eudaimonic Happiness

	Mean	Std Deviation	N
Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ)	<b>72.90</b>	<b>16.558</b>	<b>30</b>
Subjective Well-Being Scale	<b>16.63</b>	<b>18.018</b>	<b>30</b>
Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being (QEWB)	<b>51.57</b>	<b>7.864</b>	<b>30</b>
Age	<b>22.97</b>	<b>4.817</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 1.2 shows the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between the two variables i.e. Emotional Abuse and Hedonic Happiness which is measured by Subjective Well-Being Scale. First the correlation between Emotional Abuse and Hedonic Happiness was tested which was found to have significantly negative correlation as the 'p value'(.004) is smaller than 0.05, and  $r = -.505$  which interprets that there is an negative significant relationship between Emotional Abuse and Hedonic Happiness, meaning if Emotional Abuse is high Hedonic Happiness is low and vice versa.

**Table 1.2:** Relation between Emotional Abuse and Hedonic Happiness of Young Adults

Variables		Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ)	Hedonic Happiness
Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ)	Pearson Correlation	<b>1</b>	<b>-.505**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<b>.004</b>
	N	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>

**\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Table 1.3 shows the correlation between Emotional Abuse and Eudaimonic Happiness which was found to have no significant correlation as the 'p value'(.786) is greater than 0.05,  $r = .052$ , which interprets that there is no significant relationship between Emotional Abuse and Eudaimonic Happiness.

**Table 1.3:** Relation between Emotional Abuse and Eudaimonic Happiness of Young Adults

Variables		Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ)	Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being (QEWB)
Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ)	Pearson Correlation	<b>1</b>	<b>.052</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>30</b>	<b>.786</b>
	N	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>

To examine the prediction of Emotional Abuse on Hedonic Happiness and Eudaimonic Happiness, i.e. to test if Emotional Abuse predicts Hedonic Happiness and Eudaimonic Happiness linear regression was used. The adjusted R square (.228) showed in the Table 1.4 that there is 22.8% variance in the criterion variable Hedonic Happiness by the predictor variable Emotional Abuse. The Table 1.5 shows that  $F(1, 28) = 9.561$ ,  $p = .004$  which interprets that Emotional Abuse does significantly predicts Hedonic Happiness.

**Table 1.4:** The Impact of Emotional Abuse On Hedonic Happiness & Eudaimonic Happiness

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.505 <sup>a</sup>	.255	.228	15.832
2	.052 <sup>a</sup>	.003	-.033	7.992

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ)

**Table 1.5:** The Impact of Emotional Abuse on Hedonic Happiness

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2396.531	1	2396.531	9.561	.004 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	7018.436	28	250.658		
	Total	9414.967	29			

a. Dependent Variable: Subjective Well-Being Scale

b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ)

**Table 1.6:** The Impact of Emotional Abuse on Eudaimonic Happiness

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
2	Regression	4.817	1	4.817	.075	.786 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1788.550	28	63.877		
	Total	1793.367	29			

a. Dependent Variable: Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being (QEWB)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ)

Table 1.6 shows there was no significant prediction established between Emotional Abuse and Eudaimonic Happiness as  $F(1, 28) = .075$ ,  $p = .786$  which interprets that Emotional Abuse does not significantly predicts Eudaimonic Happiness.

## V. DISCUSSION

Table 1.2 shows that there is significantly negative correlation between Emotional Abuse and Hedonic Happiness as  $r = -.505$ , and the Table 1.5 shows that  $F(1, 28) = 9.561$ ,  $p = .004$  which interprets that Emotional Abuse does significantly predicts Hedonic Happiness. Thus the results suggest that Hedonic Happiness of young adults is reduced if there is Emotional Abuse in a relationship. This interprets that when an individual is experiencing Emotional Abuse it lowers the individual's Hedonic Happiness, as it creates disruption in his/her life and negative emotions. These findings are also supported by Black, et al. (2011) administered an investigation which also showed that Emotional Abuse by an intimate partner included 48.4% of women and 48.8% of men. Consequently, Emotional Abuse appeared to be the most common form of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). It has been observed that individuals who are involved in emotionally abusive relationships were more likely to experience mental health problems such as depression and PTSD (Ehrensaft, Cohen, & Johnson, 2006). Emotional Abuse within intimate relationships is prevalent and is the most inescapable form of relationship maltreatment (Karakurt & Silver, 2013). Thus if an individual is going through Emotional Abuse their Hedonic Happiness is low which is a very important aspect to live a healthy and fulfilling life (Anand, 2016). Even Hedonic processes could be correlated with endogenous opioids in the brain that are involved in pleasure and regulation of homeostatic processes (Vitterso, Oelmann & Wang, 2009).

Table 1.3 shows no significant correlation between Emotional Abuse and Eudaimonic Happiness and Table 1.6 also shows that there was no significant prediction established between Emotional Abuse and Eudaimonic Happiness as  $F(1, 28) = .075$ ,  $p = .786$  which interprets that Emotional Abuse does not significantly predict Eudaimonic Happiness. These results could be because as humans, no matter what difficult and negative situation we are in, as a species are extremely hopeful and always looks forward to achieve a more positive and fulfilling life (O'Connell, 2018). These findings may perhaps because Eudaimonic well-being can be achieved by pursuing personal growth and development that it is a more precise measure of well-being according to this philosophy. The Eudaimonic quest of challenge and growth has been said to be related to the dopamine system, which in turn is associated with interest and novelty-seeking (Keyes, 2002). Research shows that a balance i.e. both Hedonia and Eudaimonia Happiness are needed for a fulfilling happy life. Researchers when assessing both Hedonia and Eudaimonia, found that for the people who score high on both Hedonic and Eudaimonic outcomes also have a higher degree of positive mental health than other people (Keyes, 2002). In another research by Babu & Kar (2009) though it showed that 16% of women had experienced physical forms of domestic abuse, 25% sexual abuse, 52% Emotional Abuse. Whereas men experienced 22% of physical form of domestic abuse, 17% sexual, and 59% Emotional Abuse. However the result of the present study showing no significant correlation and prediction of Emotional Abuse in the participant's Eudaimonic Happiness might be as the participants were young adults; they still have dreams and aspirations for a positive future. The concept of Eudaimonic Happiness draws its basis from Maslow's Self-Actualisation Theory, which means that these participants are still working towards a fulfilling life. And they do experience Happiness instead of being in sometimes Emotionally Abusive relationship, as they do see the greater good in their life (O'Connell, 2018).

## VI. CONCLUSION

The current study explored the relationship and prediction of Emotional Abuse on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Happiness. The findings of this study suggested that there is a significantly negative correlation between Emotional Abuse and Hedonic Happiness. However, Emotional Abuse did not have a significant relationship with Eudaimonic Happiness. The current study has also established that Emotional Abuse significantly predicts Hedonic Happiness, however, there was no significant prediction observed on Eudaimonic Happiness.

## REFERENCES

1. Anand, P. (2016). Happiness, Well-being and Human Development: the case for subjective measures, UNDP Human Development Report. New York, USA.
2. Arias, I., & Pape, K. T. (1999). Psychological Abuse: Implications for adjustment and commitment to leave violent partners. *Violence and Victims*, 14(1), 55–67.
3. Babu, B. V., & Kar, S. K. (2009). Domestic violence against women in eastern India: a population-based study on prevalence and related issues. *BMC Public Health*, 9, 129. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-9-129
4. Black, M. C., Basile, K. C., Breiding, M. J., Smith, S. G., Walters, M. L., Merrick, M. T., & Stevens, M. R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA.
5. Borg, W. R., & Gall, M. D. (1989). Educational research. An introduction (5th ed.). White Plains, New York: Longman Pub Group.
6. Capaldi, D. M., Knoble, N.B., Shortt, J. W., & Kim, H.K. (April 2012). A Systematic Review of Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Violence. *Partner Abuse*, 3(2), 231–280.
7. Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2009). New measures of well-being: Flourishing and Positive and Negative Feelings. *Social Indicators Research*, 39, 247-266.
8. Ehrensaft, M. K., Cohen, P., & Johnson, J. G. (2006). Development of personality disorder symptoms and the risk for partner violence. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 115(3), 474-483.
9. Helliwell, F.J., Layard, R., & Sachs, D.J.,(Eds.). (2019). World Happiness Report 2016 Update, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network; Earth Institute University of Columbia.
10. Hunter, S., Fears, S. K., Jones, D., & Rennie, N. (2018). The Impact of Motivation on the Relationship of Academic Stress and Psychological Well-being Among College Students (Doctoral dissertation, Brenau University).
11. Karakurt, G., & Silver, K. E. (2013). Emotional Abuse in intimate relationships: the role of gender and age. *Violence and Victims*, 28(5), 804.
12. Keyes, C. L. M. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, 43, 207-222.
13. O'Connell, C. (2018). Exploring the Cultural Applicability of Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-being to a Multi-Cultural Population in the United Arab Emirates. *Middle East Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(1), 50-64.

14. Perkins, J.M., Lee, H., James, K.S. et al., (2016). Marital status, widowhood duration, gender and health outcomes: a cross-sectional study among older adults in India. *BMC Public Health* 16, 1032.
15. Ray, S. (2016), Amartya Sen on democracy, social infrastructure and economic growth in India, YourStory, Retrieved from [http:// https://yourstory.com/2016/11/amartya-sen-indian-development](http://https://yourstory.com/2016/11/amartya-sen-indian-development)
16. Sinha, M. (Ed.). (2013). *Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends (2012)*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.
17. Tomison A. M., & Tucci J. (1997) Emotional Abuse: The hidden form of maltreatment. *Issues in Child Abuse Prevention*, 8(Spring).
18. Vitterso, J., Oelmann, H. I., & Wang, A. L. (2009). Life satisfaction is not a balanced estimator of the good life: Evidence from reaction-time measures and self-reported emotions. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 10, 1–17.
19. Waterman, A. S., Schwartz, S. J., Zamboanga, B. L., Ravert, R. D., Williams, M. K., Agocha, V. B. Brent, D. M. (2010). The questionnaire for Eudaimonic well-being: Psychometric properties, demographic comparisons, and evidence of validity. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 5, 41–61.
20. Weaver, T. L., & Clum, G. A. (1995). Psychological distress associated with interpersonal violence: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 15(2), 115-140. doi:10.1016/0272-7358(95)00004-9
21. Williams, S. L., & Frieze, I. H. (2005). Courtship Behaviours, Relationship Violence, and Breakup Persistence in College Men and Women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 29(3), 248–257.