



Research Article

Sociodemographic Factors and Happiness as Determinants of Students' Academic Achievement

Yafi Sabila Rosyad¹, Dandi Oka Subantara¹, Salis Miftahul Khoeriyah¹, Rika Monika¹, Firmina Theresia Kora²

¹Nursing Department, Faculty of Health Science, Universitas Bhakti Husada Indonesia, west Java, Indonesia

²Nursing Department, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Wira Husada, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Correspondence

Phone: (+62) 82388417765

E-mail: Rosyad2yafi@gmail.com

Website

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ABSTRACT

Students' GPA is frequently linked to a variety of internal and external factors, including sociodemographic characteristics such as gender and area of residence, as well as psychological variables such as happiness levels. However, the association between happiness and academic achievement has not been clearly established in prior study. The purpose of this study is to examine the association between gender, place of residence, and happiness levels in relation to students' Grade Point Average (GPA). The study followed a descriptive correlational strategy. Data was obtained from 62 students using a questionnaire that included factors like gender, place of residence, happiness level, GPA, and the Indonesian version of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQI). The research was conducted using the Chi-Square test for categorical correlations, the independent t-test for comparing mean GPAs between groups, and one-way ANOVA to assess the impact of happiness level on GPA. The findings revealed no statistically significant associations were found between gender and happiness level ($p=0.481$), gender and GPA ($p=0.111$), place of residence and happiness level ($p=0.537$), place of residence and GPA ($p=0.090$), or happiness level and GPA ($p=0.401$). Nevertheless, students who live with their parents tend to have higher GPAs than students who reside in dorms. The results indicate that no statistically significant associations were observed between gender, place of residence, happiness level, and students' GPA. Descriptively, students living with their parents tended to have higher GPAs than those residing in dormitories, although this difference was not statistically significant. These findings suggest that sociodemographic characteristics alone may not sufficiently explain variations in academic performance within this sample.

INTRODUCTION

Student academic achievement is an important measure for determining the success of the higher education process. grade point average (GPA) is frequently used as an objective measure to describe students' academic success throughout their education (Scheel & Rouse, 2020). This achievement is controlled not just by intellectual capacity, but also by a variety of sociodemographic and psychological factors.

Gender and place of residence are frequently researched because they can represent disparities in students' learning experiences and social support. Gender differences, for example, are frequently related with variances in learning motivation, learning tactics, and cognitive styles. A meta-analysis research conducted by Voyer and Voyer (2014) found that women consistently have somewhat superior academic achievement than men across various fields of study. Other studies, however, confirm that these differences are not always statistically significant, depending on the social and educational setting (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Living circumstances also influence students' academic experiences. Students who live with their parents or relatives tend to receive more social and emotional support than those who live in boarding homes or dormitories. Family support can reduce stress, promote psychological well-being, and allow students to concentrate better on academic tasks (Kuh et al., 2007). Students who live far away from their families, on the other hand, encounter independence, social adaption, and financial pressures that might disrupt their personal and academic lives (Astin, 1993).

Aside from sociodemographic parameters, happiness or subjective well-being is a psychological element that is increasingly being examined in studies on academic achievement. Diener (1984) defines happiness as life satisfaction and good affective experiences that reflect a person's

overall well-being. In the context of students, happiness is intimately associated to motivation, study persistence, and academic stress management (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Students that are cheerful are more productive, have higher learning concentration, and attain peak academic performance (Steinmayr, Weidinger, Schwinger, & Spinath, 2016).

However, the link between happiness and academic accomplishment is not always clear. Some research reveals a positive relationship, while others yield weak or insignificant results. For example, Owens, Shrestha, and Dichter (2014) discovered that subjective well-being correlates positively with the GPA of medical students in the United States. Wang, Liu, and Li (2020) discovered that the effect of happiness on academic achievement became non-significant after controlling for mediating variables such as social support and academic stress.

The discrepancy of these findings implies that the relationship between happiness and academic achievement is context-dependent, impacted by the learning environment and sociodemographic factors. In the Indonesian setting, research combining sociodemographic characteristics such as gender and place of residence with happiness as a predictor of GPA remains sparse. In fact, a more comprehensive knowledge of this relationship is critical to assisting educational institutions in developing measures to increase student well-being, which in turn influences academic accomplishment.

As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between gender and happiness levels and their impact on students' grades. This study aims to answer three basic questions: (1) Is there a link between gender and students' happiness levels and GPAs? (2) Is location of residence related to happiness levels and GPAs? (3) Does happiness level have a link with students' GPAs.

METHOD

Research Design

This study used a quantitative methodology and a correlational analytical approach to investigate the association between sociodemographic characteristics (gender and place of residence), happiness levels, and students' academic achievement. The correlational technique is used to determine the degree of association between variables without affecting the independent variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population and Sample

Population and Sample The study's population consists of all first-year nursing students at Universitas Bhakti Husada Indonesia for the academic year 2024/2025. The sample size was selected using stratified random sampling procedures (Hayes, 2022), yielding a total of 62 students. The admission requirements were active students, both male and female, with a variety of living situations (family, boarding home, or dormitory).

Research Instruments

The research instrument employed the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire in the Indonesian language version (OHQ-I) to assess students' happiness levels, which consisted of 29 question items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) (Hills & Argyle, 2002; Rahmawati et al., 2017). The reliability test results were found to be 0.83 (Adeline, 2017; Rahmawati et al., 2017; Kenzo et al., 2024).

Data Collection

Data were collected online using Google Forms from January to August 2025. Prior to completing the questionnaire, respondents were requested to read the consent form. Participation is entirely voluntary, and all data collected is kept anonymous in compliance with research ethics principles.

Data Analysis

The Chi-Square test was used to investigate the relationship between categorical variables (gender and place of residence) and happiness levels; the Independent t-test was used to compare GPA based on gender; the One-Way ANOVA was used to investigate GPA differences based on place of residence; and the Pearson Correlation was used to examine the relationship between happiness levels and GPA. The significance level was set to $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Table 1
Demographic data and happiness levels

Variable	Mean	SD	Min–Max	f	%
Gender					
Male	–	–	–	9	14.5
Female	–	–	–	53	85.5
place of residence					
who live with their parents or relatives	–	–	–	43	69.4
who live in boarding house	–	–	–	19	30.6
happiness levels					
Not particularly pleased.	–	–	–	44	71.0
A little unhappy	–	–	–	18	29.0
GPA	3.55	0.24	2.83–3.95	–	–

The majority of responders were female, totaling 53 (85.5%), and 43 (69.4%) lived with their parents or siblings. 44 respondents (71%) reported being dissatisfied, with an average GPA of 3.55 (SD 0.24). This suggests that the students' GPAs are rather high, despite the fact that the majority of them report moderate or poor levels of happiness.

The test results demonstrate that there is no significant association between gender, place of residence, happiness level, and students' GPA ($p > 0.05$). However, students living with their parents tend to have a higher GPA than those living in boarding houses (table 2).

Table 2
Relationship between sociodemographics and GPA

Correlation	Analysis	Statistic value	p-value
Gender × happiness levels	Chi-Square	0.496	0.481
Gender × GPA	Independent t-test	-1.756	0.111
Place of residence × happiness levels	Chi-Square	0.380	0.537
Place of residence × GPA	Independent t-test	-1.729	0.090
happiness levels × GPA	One-way ANOVA	0.715	0.401

DISCUSSION

This study found no significant association between gender, place of residence, or level of happiness and pupils' academic achievement. Nevertheless, it was shown that students living with their parents had a higher GPA than students living in dorms. This conclusion shows that sociodemographic and psychological aspects should be considered more completely.

1. Correlation between Gender, GPA and Happiness levels

The findings of this study reveal no significant difference in GPA between males and girls. Descriptively, female GPA is slightly greater than male GPA. Previous studies (Eshetu et al., 2024; Martínez-Huerta et al., 2024; Yuorsuu et al., 2025) have shown that gender-based inequalities in academic achievement are decreasing with increased access to and equality in higher education. Other studies have found that women have higher academic desire and self-regulation, which contributes to better accomplishment, albeit this is not always statistically significant (Munawarah, 2021; Rizanty et al., 2025; Saputra et al., 2024).

The happiness levels of male and female students are not significantly different. These findings complement recent research that suggests that subjective well-being and the level of social support have a greater influence on college students' happiness than gender alone (Mahasneh, 2022; Munjidah, 2025). In this setting, male and female students have equal potential to achieve optimal psychological well-being if their social environment is supportive.

2. Correlation between Place of independent, GPA and Happiness levels

This study also found no significant correlation between place of living and GPA or happiness. However, students who live with their parents tend to have higher GPAs. This is congruent with research by Qian et al., (2024) dan Li & Liu (2025), who indicate that emotional support and home environmental stability can promote learning concentration, reduce stress, and improve academic achievements. Students who live a long distance from their family, on the other hand, experience more difficulties with social and intellectual transition. However, new research suggests that individual coping skills and resilience can overcome these variations. Students who can adjust to a boarding house or dormitory setting can obtain the same GPA as students who live with their families (Sari, 2023).

3. Correlation between Happiness Levels and GPA

The study's findings show that happiness levels are not significantly associated to GPA. However, these results should be regarded with caution. Recent research imply that the impact of happiness on academic accomplishment is frequently indirect, mediated by variables such as intrinsic motivation, academic engagement, and stress management (Carmona-Halty et al., 2021; Galang, 2023). Happiness improves cognitive function and self-regulation capacity, although its effect

on GPA is heavily impacted by contextual variables such as academic load, social support, and the learning system (Fredrickson, 2004; J. Li et al., 2023). Recent longitudinal research have also found that long-term steady happiness has a stronger influence on academic achievement than situational happiness (Wu et al., 2025).

4. The implications for higher education and student welfare

Based on these findings, higher education institutions must establish strategies that address not only academic aspects, but also students' psychological well-being. Programs to boost social support, psychological counseling, and an inclusive campus atmosphere can all improve student satisfaction, which in turn improves academic performance (Phua et al., 2024; Seppälä et al., 2020).

Additionally, campus-based programs such as positive psychology intervention (PPI) have been shown to improve students' happiness, learning motivation, and academic engagement (Hobbs et al., 2022; Zahedan Zinjanab et al., 2025). This method is crucial because pupils with good psychological well-being are more likely to be academically resilient.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study suggests that student happiness is vital in promoting academic accomplishment, with higher levels of happiness positively connected with higher GPAs. Although sociodemographic factors such as gender indicate significant disparities in academic accomplishment, with female students having higher GPAs, men and women's happiness levels are well equal, and place of living has no significant effect on either happiness or achievement. This conclusion supports the theory that internal characteristics such as motivation, emotional well-being, and adaptability have a greater influence on academic success than external factors. As a result, improving the quality of higher education must focus

not just on academic aspects, but also on boosting students' psychological well-being through programs that promote happiness and mental health.

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