

# The Effect of Hope and Happiness on the Spiritual Health of Adolescent Girls: A Correlational Study

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aimed to determine the relationship between happiness and hope with spiritual health among adolescent girls.

**Methods and Materials:** This study aimed to investigate the relationship between happiness and hope with spiritual health in adolescent girls. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, and a sample of 300 adolescent girls from secondary schools in Tehran was randomly selected. The research instruments included the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, the Hope Scale, and the Spiritual Health Questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing Pearson's correlation coefficient for correlation analysis and stepwise regression analysis for predictive modeling.

**Findings:** The results indicated a significant positive correlation between happiness and hope with spiritual health in adolescent girls. Specifically, hope accounted for 32% of the variance in spiritual health, while happiness explained 26% of the variance. These findings suggest that happiness and hope serve as key factors in promoting adolescents' spiritual health.

**Conclusion:** Based on these findings, it is recommended that educational and counseling programs in schools focus on fostering adolescents' happiness and hope to enhance their spiritual health. Furthermore, the results of this study can serve as a foundation for future research exploring the effects of other psychological variables on adolescents' spiritual health. Given the psychological and social challenges faced by adolescent girls, emphasizing happiness and hope can be considered an effective strategy for improving their quality of life and spiritual well-being.

**Keywords:** Hope, Happiness, Spiritual Health, Adolescent Girls.

## 1. Introduction

A

dolescence is one of the most critical stages of human development, accompanied by significant physical,

psychological, and social changes. This period is recognized as a crucial developmental phase, as adolescents face academic pressures, emotional fluctuations, and social challenges, which can increase stress and anxiety (Etemadi & Reza, 2024). Among adolescents, girls may be more vulnerable to mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and eating disorders, due to their unique physiological and psychological differences compared to boys. Since adolescent girls' health status can have long-term effects on their future lives, paying attention to their psychological and spiritual health during this period is of utmost importance (Eoh et al., 2022).

Spiritual health, as one of the core dimensions of mental health, plays a crucial role in individuals' psychological well-being. The World Health Organization (WHO) categorizes health into four primary dimensions: physical, psychological, social, and spiritual health. Although these dimensions are interconnected and influence one another, spiritual health, which encompasses individuals' interactions with themselves, others, and a transcendent force, gains particular significance during adolescence. At this stage, adolescents seek meaning and purpose in life and become increasingly interested in spiritual and metaphysical matters, which can contribute to their spiritual health development (ZahedBabolan et al., 2022). Given the significance of spiritual health during adolescence, it is essential to identify and examine the factors influencing it.

A relatively novel approach in this field is positive psychology, which emphasizes enhancing positive emotions and individual strengths. Two key positive psychological constructs that can affect spiritual health are hope and happiness. Hope, as a driving force in life, and happiness, as a state of life satisfaction, can both contribute to the improvement of adolescents' spiritual health (Winter Plumb et al., 2020).

Happiness is a concept that has received significant attention in positive psychology. It is a state characterized by life satisfaction and positive emotions. In positive psychology, happiness is not merely considered a fleeting emotion but rather a long-term and stable experience of satisfaction and fulfillment (Eoh et al., 2022). Martin Seligman, one of the pioneers of positive psychology, categorized happiness into three core components: pleasure-seeking, engagement in meaningful activities, and life satisfaction. He further classified happiness into two primary types: emotional happiness (life satisfaction and positive emotions) and cognitive happiness (an individual's

cognitive evaluation of their own life) (Seligman et al., 2020).

Indicators of happiness typically include subjective assessments of well-being, positive affect, and overall life satisfaction. Happiness can also be considered a cognitive appraisal of one's life, meaning how an individual judges their own circumstances (Argyle, 2001). Various studies have demonstrated that happiness significantly impacts psychological well-being, physical health, and even academic and social success. Happy individuals are less likely to experience anxiety and depression and are better equipped to cope with life challenges (Diener et al., 2018).

Hope, as a fundamental factor in psychological and spiritual well-being, refers to having positive expectations for the future and the ability to achieve goals. Charles Snyder, a prominent theorist in the field of hope, divided hope into two primary components: agency thinking and pathway thinking. Agency thinking refers to the motivation to pursue goals, while pathway thinking pertains to the ability to generate multiple strategies to achieve those goals (Snyder et al., 2006). Snyder conceptualized hope as a goal-oriented cognitive construct, emphasizing an individual's belief in their capability to attain their aspirations (Snyder et al., 2006). High-hope individuals demonstrate confidence in their ability to overcome challenges and find solutions, which helps them remain optimistic about the future (Bartholomew et al., 2020).

Hope serves as a motivational resource that positively influences an individual's behaviors and emotions. Individuals with greater hope tend to be more determined in achieving their goals and show significant improvements in mental health, stress reduction, and overall life satisfaction (Zeng et al., 2022).

Hope and happiness are two interrelated constructs in positive psychology that are closely connected. Hope, as a motivational and driving force, directly affects happiness. Hopeful individuals not only envision a better future but also exhibit greater motivation to achieve their objectives. When faced with challenges and difficulties, these individuals maintain a positive outlook on their journey, leading to increased levels of happiness (Snyder et al., 2006). Various studies have indicated that hope and happiness have a direct and significant relationship. Individuals with higher levels of hope experience greater life satisfaction, more positive emotions, and overall higher happiness (Bailey & Snyder, 2007; Mokhles & Doorrikhteh, 2023; Snyder et al., 2006).

Other studies have also demonstrated that hopeful individuals are less prone to depression and anxiety and

show greater resilience in coping with life's difficulties, which, in turn, enhances their happiness (Ciarrochia et al., 2015).

Mokhles and Doorrikhteh (2023) examined the relationship between happiness and life expectancy with quality of life and self-efficacy among female heads of households in Urmia. The study sample included 245 women, selected using Cochran's formula. Their findings indicated significant correlations between happiness and quality of life ( $r = 0.691$ ), hope and quality of life ( $r = 0.798$ ), happiness and self-efficacy ( $r = 0.611$ ), and hope and self-efficacy ( $r = 0.777$ ) at a 99% confidence level. Additionally, happiness and hope were predictors of quality of life and self-efficacy at a 99% confidence level. The study concluded that hope for the future helps female heads of households move toward desirable goals and has a strong association with self-efficacy. Given the numerous challenges faced by female heads of households in society, those with higher motivation and aspirations exhibit greater self-efficacy (Mokhles & Doorrikhteh, 2023).

Shadkam et al. (2023) conducted a study on academic vitality and its predictors based on hope, happiness, and meaning in life among middle school students. Their findings revealed that hope, happiness, and meaning in life significantly and positively impacted academic vitality. Since these variables are key constructs in positive psychology and contribute to fostering enthusiasm in educational settings, they are crucial determinants of academic vitality. Happiness and vitality are closely related variables, and individuals who experience high levels of happiness tend to exhibit greater energy and motivation in academic and professional settings. Moreover, students with higher happiness levels derive much of their happiness from academic satisfaction, which in turn encourages greater effort and enthusiasm for completing school tasks (Shadkam et al., 2023).

Shdaifat et al. (2024) conducted a study titled "The Relationship Between Personality Traits and Happiness: The Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation", examining the link between personality traits and happiness, while exploring emotion regulation as a mediating factor. Their findings demonstrated that personality traits such as extraversion, emotional stability, and openness to experience had a direct and positive impact on happiness. Furthermore, emotion regulation functioned as a significant mediator in this relationship. This implies that individuals with better emotion regulation abilities can enhance the positive effects of their personality traits on happiness. Therefore, emotion

regulation is considered a key factor in improving happiness and modulating the influence of personality traits on happiness (Shdaifat et al., 2024).

Given the large adolescent population in Iran and the importance of spiritual health in this demographic group, identifying and strengthening the factors influencing the spiritual health of adolescent girls is of particular significance. Due to the critical role of spiritual health in promoting mental well-being—especially among adolescent girls—this study was conducted. Based on the existing research literature in this field, the present study aims to address the question: Is there a relationship between spiritual health, happiness, and hope?

Thus, this research was conducted to determine the relationship between happiness, hope, and spiritual health among adolescent girls.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study is a descriptive-correlational study conducted to examine the relationship between happiness and hope with spiritual health among adolescent girls. The statistical population of this study included all female high school students (second cycle) in District 1 of the Tehran Department of Education during the 2023–2024 academic year. A simple random sampling method was used for participant selection. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's table, and based on the population size, 384 participants were selected for the study. Students were randomly chosen from schools in District 1 of Tehran, and the research questionnaires were distributed among them.

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. Happiness

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (2001) consists of 29 items measuring five dimensions: life satisfaction, self-esteem, subjective well-being, contentment, and positive affect. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (Yazdizadeh, 2024).

#### 2.2.2. Hope

Snyder's Hope Scale (2006), a 12-item questionnaire, includes two subscales: agency thinking and pathway thinking. Responses were scored using a 5-point Likert

scale, with higher scores indicating greater levels of hope (Kermani et al., 2011).

### 2.2.3. Spiritual Well-being

Paloutzian and Ellison’s Spiritual Well-being Scale (1982) comprises 20 items, assessing spiritual well-being across two dimensions: religious well-being and existential well-being. Responses were scored on a 6-point Likert scale, with higher scores representing higher levels of spiritual well-being (Hashemi et al., 2024).

### 2.3. Data Analysis

The content validity of the instruments was confirmed by experts in the field. Additionally, reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, which yielded values of 0.85 for the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, 0.81 for the Hope Scale, and 0.83 for the Spiritual Well-being Scale, indicating satisfactory reliability.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing descriptive and inferential statistical methods. In

the descriptive analysis, the mean and standard deviation of each variable were calculated. For inferential analysis, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationships between variables, and stepwise regression analysis was employed to predict spiritual well-being based on happiness and hope. The significance level for all statistical tests was set at 0.05.

## 3. Findings and Results

This section presents the results of the statistical analysis of the collected data. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used. In the descriptive analysis, the mean and standard deviation of the study variables are reported. Additionally, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was conducted to assess the normality of data distribution. The mean and standard deviation of spiritual well-being, happiness, and hope are detailed in Table 1. The results of the K-S test indicated that all study variables were normally distributed ( $P > 0.05$ ), allowing the use of parametric tests for data analysis.

**Table 1**

*Mean, Standard Deviation, and K-S Test for Study Variables*

| Variable               | Mean  | Standard Deviation | K-S Test | P-value |
|------------------------|-------|--------------------|----------|---------|
| Spiritual Well-being   | 86.12 | 5.44               | 0.975    | 0.167   |
| Existential Well-being | 46.26 | 3.19               | 0.773    | 0.134   |
| Religious Well-being   | 39.86 | 2.25               | 1.072    | 0.205   |
| Happiness              | 49.3  | 15.65              | 1.47     | 0.333   |
| Life Satisfaction      | 14.2  | 4.65               | 1.02     | 0.471   |
| Self-esteem            | 13.0  | 4.1                | 0.89     | 0.346   |
| Subjective Well-being  | 7.1   | 1.7                | 1.25     | 0.21    |
| Contentment            | 5.9   | 2.2                | 1.56     | 0.098   |
| Positive Affect        | 9.1   | 3.2                | 0.97     | 0.291   |
| Hope                   | 44.7  | 11.44              | 0.86     | 0.209   |
| Agency Thinking        | 20.3  | 5.9                | 0.67     | 0.120   |
| Pathway Thinking       | 24.4  | 5.54               | 0.99     | 0.111   |

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that the spiritual well-being of adolescent girls in the study sample is relatively high, which may suggest a strong association with happiness and hope. Spiritual well-being is often associated with a sense of meaning and purpose in life, and these results suggest that adolescent girls possess a considerable level of spiritual well-being. This finding highlights the potential impact of hope and happiness on spiritual well-being.

Regarding happiness, although its mean score is relatively high, the large standard deviation suggests significant individual differences in happiness levels among the participants. These differences may be attributed to

various factors, including social, family, and personal circumstances. Nevertheless, the overall correlation between happiness and spiritual well-being suggests that happier individuals tend to have better spiritual well-being. This may be due to a more positive outlook and better coping mechanisms for life challenges.

Similarly, hope, which is recognized as a key factor in resilience and personal growth among adolescents, also showed a relatively high mean score in this sample. Hope can act as a motivational force for spiritual well-being, as hopeful individuals often demonstrate a greater ability to find meaning and purpose in life.

Therefore, the study’s results suggest that hope is a crucial factor in enhancing the spiritual well-being of adolescent girls and plays a significant role in fostering this aspect of their psychological health.

The Pearson correlation coefficient at a 5% error level is presented in **Table 2**, illustrating the overall relationship between happiness, hope, and spiritual health.

**Table 2**

*Pearson Correlation Coefficient Between Happiness, Hope, and Spiritual Health*

| Scales                | Spiritual Health | Life Satisfaction | Self-Esteem | Subjective Well-being | Contentment | Positive Affect | Agency Thinking | Pathway Thinking |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Spiritual Health      | 1                |                   |             |                       |             |                 |                 |                  |
| Life Satisfaction     | 0.453            | 1                 |             |                       |             |                 |                 |                  |
| Self-Esteem           | 0.567            | 0.650             | 1           |                       |             |                 |                 |                  |
| Subjective Well-being | 0.444            | 0.630             | 0.453       | 1                     |             |                 |                 |                  |
| Contentment           | 0.345            | 0.745             | 0.444       | 0.641                 | 1           |                 |                 |                  |
| Positive Affect       | 0.370            | 0.520             | 0.490       | 0.510                 | 0.677       | 1               |                 |                  |
| Agency Thinking       | 0.653            | 0.652             | 0.654       | 0.666                 | 0.592       | 0.690           | 1               |                  |
| Pathway Thinking      | 0.679            | 0.560             | 0.532       | 0.520                 | 0.546       | 0.519           | 0.620           | 1                |

The Pearson correlation coefficients in **Table 2** indicate positive associations between happiness and hope with spiritual health among adolescent girls. These correlations suggest that an increase in any of the components of happiness and hope leads to a significant improvement in spiritual health. Given the significant correlations between happiness and hope with spiritual health, the next step involves stepwise regression analysis.

Stepwise regression is a useful tool for identifying the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable, allowing for the determination of which happiness and hope

components significantly predict spiritual health. In this analysis, independent variables are gradually introduced into the model to examine their impact on the dependent variable. This approach helps determine the relative importance of each predictor variable and how these factors contribute to increasing or decreasing spiritual health among adolescent girls.

By conducting this analysis, we can gain deeper insights into the relationships between happiness, hope, and spiritual health, ultimately deriving practical implications for enhancing spiritual well-being in this age group.

**Table 3**

*Stepwise Regression Results*

| Steps  | Constant & Predictor Variables | Unstandardized Coefficients (B) | SE    | Beta  | T      | P     | R     | R <sup>2</sup> | F      |
|--------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|----------------|--------|
| Step 1 | Constant                       | 27.2                            | 2.142 | -     | 16.123 | 0.000 | 0.567 | 0.32           | 93.86  |
|        | Hope                           | 0.532                           | 0.050 | 0.553 | 9.578  | 0.000 |       |                |        |
| Step 2 | Constant                       | 2.03                            | 0.173 | -     | 13.672 | 0.000 | 0.512 | 0.26           | 74.976 |
|        | Hope                           | 0.421                           | 0.053 | 0.382 | 6.670  | 0.000 |       |                |        |
|        | Happiness                      | 0.291                           | 0.033 | 0.314 | 5.590  | 0.000 |       |                |        |

The results from the stepwise regression analysis in **Table 3** indicate that hope and happiness serve as significant predictors of spiritual health among adolescent girls.

Step 1: Hope alone explains 32% of the variance in spiritual health. This finding highlights hope as a major determinant of spiritual health, suggesting that a positive outlook on life and a sense of purpose contribute to enhancing spiritual well-being.

Step 2: With the addition of happiness to the model, the explained variance increases. Happiness further contributes

to predicting 26% of the variance in spiritual health. This result underscores happiness as a key factor in improving spiritual well-being, as it fosters inner satisfaction and life fulfillment.

These findings indicate that both hope and happiness jointly predict a substantial portion of spiritual health in adolescent girls. The significant coefficients for both predictors confirm that an increase in hope and happiness leads to a notable improvement in spiritual health.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the relationships between happiness, hope, and spiritual health among adolescent girls. The findings indicate that happiness and hope function as key variables in promoting spiritual health among adolescents. Overall, these results demonstrate a positive correlation between happiness, hope, and spiritual health. Adolescents who experience higher levels of happiness and hope are more likely to have greater spiritual well-being, emphasizing the importance of psychological factors in enhancing spiritual health (Mokhles & Doorrikhteh, 2023; Winter Plumb et al., 2020).

Happiness, which encompasses aspects such as life satisfaction and self-esteem, has a particularly strong impact on spiritual health (Mokhles & Doorrikhteh, 2023; Shadkam et al., 2023; Shdaifat et al., 2024). This suggests that feeling satisfied with life and valuing oneself can serve as foundational elements for fostering spiritual health. The findings also indicate that hope has a stronger effect on spiritual health, accounting for the largest proportion of explained variance in spiritual well-being. Nevertheless, happiness also plays a significant role, and the combined effect of these two variables provides a substantial explanation for spiritual health variance. These results highlight the necessity of enhancing happiness and hope as strategic approaches for improving spiritual well-being in adolescent girls.

Among the various components of hope, pathway thinking exhibited the strongest correlation with spiritual health. This strong association suggests that the ability to plan and set life goals plays a crucial role in promoting spiritual well-being. Adolescents who have a clear vision and structured plans for their future are more likely to find meaning in life and experience greater spiritual stability and balance.

On the other hand, contentment demonstrated the weakest correlation with spiritual health. This may indicate that while momentary satisfaction is important, its impact on spiritual health is less significant compared to other components of happiness and hope. This distinction suggests that spiritual health is more influenced by stable psychological constructs, such as hope and life planning, rather than transient emotions.

The positive correlation between positive affect and spiritual health highlights the importance of positive emotions in strengthening this dimension of adolescent life. Individuals who frequently experience positive emotions are

more likely to develop a deeper sense of spirituality and purpose in life. This finding underscores the interconnection between psychological and spiritual well-being, where positive emotions serve as reinforcers of spiritual health.

Hope emerged as a fundamental factor in this study. Hope for the future is not only a positive emotional state but also a psychological skill that enables adolescents to cope with life challenges (Bartholomew et al., 2020; Ciarrochia et al., 2015; Zeng et al., 2022). These findings align with previous research, which suggests that hope can enhance quality of life and reduce stress in adolescents. In particular, within educational settings, improving hope can lead to higher motivation and academic performance, which, in turn, reinforces spiritual health.

Happiness was also identified as a critical component in this study. The results suggest that experiencing happiness and life satisfaction contributes to a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in life. Previous studies have established that happiness is directly linked to mental health and can improve social relationships and interpersonal skills (Diener et al., 2018). This finding is particularly relevant to adolescents, as happiness fosters positive social interactions and social support networks, which are crucial during this developmental stage.

A comparison of these findings with previous studies reveals that the relationship between happiness, hope, and spiritual health has been explored in various contexts. For example, a study conducted by Masoumi et al. (2020) found a significant positive relationship between hope and spiritual health, which aligns with the present study's findings. Additionally, other research has emphasized the role of happiness in spiritual health, demonstrating that happier individuals tend to develop stronger spiritual experiences (Seligman et al., 2020).

#### 5. Limitations & Suggestions

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study was conducted on adolescent girls in a specific educational district, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other populations, including male adolescents or students from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Second, the study relied on self-report questionnaires, which may introduce response bias due to social desirability or individual differences in self-perception. Third, as a correlational study, this research cannot establish causal relationships between happiness, hope, and spiritual health.

Additionally, other psychological, environmental, and familial factors that may influence spiritual well-being were not examined in this study.

Future research should aim to address these limitations by conducting longitudinal or experimental studies to explore the causal impact of happiness and hope on spiritual health. Expanding the sample to include adolescents from diverse cultural, socio-economic, and religious backgrounds can enhance the generalizability of the findings. Future studies may also explore additional psychological constructs, such as resilience, emotional intelligence, or mindfulness, and their interactions with spiritual well-being. Furthermore, using mixed-methods research, including qualitative interviews, could provide deeper insights into the subjective experiences of adolescents regarding happiness, hope, and spiritual health.

The findings of this study have practical implications for educational policymakers, school counselors, and mental health professionals. Schools should incorporate positive psychology-based programs aimed at enhancing hope and happiness through structured activities, goal-setting workshops, and resilience training. Educators and counselors can design interventions focusing on life purpose, optimism, and positive emotions to foster students' spiritual health. Additionally, family-based programs that encourage positive communication and emotional support can further reinforce adolescents' hope and happiness, ultimately contributing to better psychological and spiritual well-being.

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**Declaration of Interest**

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

**Ethical Considerations**

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

**Transparency of Data**

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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**Authors' Contributions**

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