

# Investigating the Relationship among Preschool Curriculum, Upbringing Styles, and Happiness of Students

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among preschool curriculum, upbringing style, and happiness of preschool students. This study is a descriptive-correlational research from research methodology perspective. The statistical population of this study includes teachers of preschools in the city of Isfahan. The population consists of 540 members. A sample of 200 teachers was selected randomly. In order to collect the research data, a researcher-developed questionnaire and two standardized questionnaires (curriculum questionnaire of Argil and upbringing questionnaire of Baumrind) were employed. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of curriculum, upbringing, and happiness questionnaires was 0.95, 0.84, and 0.89 relatively. In order to summarize and analyze the research data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between curriculum and happiness. Also the findings showed that there is a significant negative relationship between upbringing and happiness. The findings also indicated that the average of all research variables (except arbitrary and convenience styles) was higher than moderate level. A significant positive relationship was observed between curriculum and happiness and a significant negative relationship was observed between upbringing and happiness. In addition, significant positive relationships were observed among goals, teaching methods, content, and evaluation with happiness. On the other hand, significant negative relationships were observed among arbitrary and convenience styles with happiness. Also significant relationships were observed among content and evaluation with happiness. Finally, any significant relationships were not observed between arbitrary style and happiness.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Upbringing Styles, Happiness

## 1. Introduction

The students are the main basis of educational system in any country. It can be said that improvement in the effective factors on this capital can leads to better scientific conditions in the countries. In this respect, happiness is one of the main factors which leads to growth and development of all aspects of students. Indeed, happiness can be created and improved in the environment of school through different methods. Curriculum refers to the educational content which should learned by students and its sound methods and time scale (Khosravizade, Sene, and Haghdadadi, 2011: 164). Izener (2002) points out that curriculum consists of contents, aspects, related scopes, learning opportunities and their organization, presentation styles, response styles, and evaluation procedures. Maleki (2007) indicates that curriculum is a scientific area which consists of goals, content, teaching methods, and evaluation procedures.

On the other hand, parents and upbringing styles play an important role in the student happiness and its improvement. Indeed, happiness is one of the main gifts which parents give their child. Child consumes a large of part of their time with parents. Therefore, considering parents and their upbringing styles results in recognizing the effective factors on the child happiness as the results of past studies revealed, there is a significant relationship between upbringing styles and happiness. As a result, it is inevitable to study the effective factors on the student happiness. In this respect, three styles have been suggested for upbringing including authoritative, arbitrary, and convenient styles. Each of these styles has their own outcomes. The authoritative style is the most appropriate style of upbringing. Hasnainet al. (2013) found that students, whose mother adopts authoritative style, have more self-esteem than other students. Also they found that there is not any significant difference between upbringing styles from student happiness. Simons and Conger (2007) found that authoritative style is the result of simultaneous love and control. They found that the positive outcome of

authoritative style are that child considers higher levels of love and control as the importance and respect of parents. Izer et al. (2005) found that the children, whose parents utilize arbitrary style, have communicational problems and inappropriate behaviors with their relatives. On the other hand, parents who use friendly styles have less social problems in contacting their children. Grass (2001) indicates that the perceived authoritative style leads to higher levels of happiness. He also found that in comparison to the perceived authoritative style, perceived arbitrary style has the most optimistic conditions. Stiglbauer et al. (2013) found that the positive experiences of students in school have sustainable effect on their happiness and vice versa. Marconi (2003) found that the appropriate educational content not only influences student attitude toward successful solutions, but also improve their confidence and happiness. Brien (2010) found that the sustainable happiness can be placed in the curriculum, policies, and practices of school. Also he found that happiness leads to many changes in the perspective of students and their behaviors.

Based on the above-mentioned discussion, it seems inevitable to investigate the effective factors on the student happiness such as curriculum and upbringing style. This is why that the present study was aimed to investigate the relationship among preschool curriculum, upbringing style, and happiness of preschool students.

Curriculum is one of the main motivators of success in any educational program. If the necessities are not considered in designing curriculum, then the program will losses its efficiency in responding student needs (Aflakifard et al., 2012). The reason is that education results in change and improvement in mankind. In addition, these changes and improvements lead to better values and abilities in mankind (Khosrovizade et al., 2011). Such feelings create positive effects in the individuals such as happiness. Generally, happiness refers to a degree of utility in which a person evaluates his/her life quality (Veenhoven, 2011). It should be noted that the concept of curriculum is more comprehensive than developing title of educational contents. Indeed, curriculum includes prediction of all activities which should be done by students in achieving their educational goals (Porzahir, 1998). The goals of formal preschool curriculum are the main criteria in selecting courses, their contents, teaching methods, test, and evaluation methods. Indeed, all parts of preschool curriculum are tools to achieve educational goals of preschool (Tiler, 2002). The content of curriculum not only refers to the parts and sections which organized as a scientific field, but also includes other related events and phenomenon (Loi, 2001). Selecting the best teaching-learning policy is another part of curriculum and its decisions should be made before developing educational contents. Different suggestive activities for student learning (learning experiences), method of information transition, selection or elimination of especial contents, continuousness of activities, volume of contents, and degree of their organization are the main factors which are influenced by educational philosophy of curriculum planners and learning-teaching methods (Loi, 2001). The evaluation is the process of determining educational goals through educational programs and education. Indeed, evaluation is the process of determining the amount of variations in the behaviors of students (Tiler, 2002). Parents are other source of student happiness. Indeed, family and upbringing style have important outcomes in social-psychological revolution of student and other behaviors such as mental, health, and educational issues (Chan and Koo, 2009). Also social supports and family health can be effective in improvement of happiness and productivity (Bakhtiar Nasrabadi et al., 2009). Baumrind uses parenthood control for determining three upbringing styles. These include arbitrary, authoritative, and convenient styles. The first style refers to the rigid rules and regulations and higher levels of acceptance. The second style refers to a combination of control, support, and rational interest. The third style refers to lower levels of control (Simons and Conger, 2007). This is why that the present study was aimed to investigate the relationship among preschool curriculum, upbringing style, and happiness of preschool students. For this purpose, the following questions should be answered. (1) Is there any significant relationship between goals of formal curriculum and student happiness? (2) Is there any significant relationship between contents of formal curriculum and student happiness? Is there any significant relationship between teaching methods of formal curriculum and student happiness? Is there any significant relationship between evaluation of formal curriculum and student happiness? Is there any significant relationship between upbringing styles (arbitrary, authoritative, and convenient) and student happiness?

## 2. Research methodology

The present study is a descriptive-correlation research. The statistical population of this study includes all teachers of preschools in the city of Isfahan. The population consists of 540 members. A sample of 200 teachers was selected randomly. The sample size was determined through Cochran sampling table. In the next step, 202 questionnaires were distributed among respondents. In order to collect the research data, a researcher-developed questionnaire and two standardized questionnaires (curriculum questionnaire of Argil and upbringing questionnaire of Baumrind) were employed. The researcher-developed questionnaire, happiness questionnaire, and upbringing questionnaire include 40 items, 29 items, and 30 items respectively. The questionnaires were

developed in the Likert five-point scale in which 1 refers to very low and 5 refers to very high. The overall Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was 0.899 for our questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of curriculum, upbringing, and happiness questionnaires was 0.95, 0.84, and 0.89 relatively.

### 3. Findings

The descriptive findings of this study revealed that 94% of the respondents were male and only 6% of them were female. From age perspective, 41.5% of the respondents had 26-35 years old. A large part of our respondents had university educations. From this population, 65.5% had M.sc degree, 23.6% had master of associate degree, and 10.9% had M.A. and higher degrees. From job perspective, 32.4% of the respondents were teacher; 7.4% were cultivation assistant, 30.9% were coach, 22.9% were cultural assistant, and 6.4% were student. 95.4% of the respondents were teacher of primary school and 4.6% of them were teacher of high school. Based on our findings, 33.2% of the respondents have less than 7 years teaching experience; 28.2% had 7-14 years teaching experiences, 21.4% had 15-21 years job experiences, and 17.1% had more than 22 years teaching experiences. Finally, 87.5% of the respondents were married and only 12.5% of them were single.

Before analyzing the research data, it is necessary to test the distribution of data. For this purpose, Kolomogorov-Smirinov test was used in the SPSS. The results of this test were presented in table 1.

**Table 1: the results of Kolomogorov-Smirinov test**

		Goals of curriculum	Content of curriculum	Teaching method	Evaluative method	Curriculum	Authoritative style	Arbitrary style	Convenient style	Upbringing	Happiness
Frequency		200	200	200	200	200	194	194	194	194	194
Normal parameters	Average	4.1534	4.1177	3.8279	4.0442	4.1095	3.9758	2.7241	2.9534	3.2172	3.5259
	Standard error	0.43208	0.59336	0.81769	0.62260	0.48424	0.47263	0.49093	0.73905	0.28682	0.41646
Kolomogorov-Smirinov		1.075	1.175	1.015	1.072	1.007	1.240	1.327	1.135	1.385	1.075
Sig		0.190	0.056	0.197	0.201	0.219	0.074	0.059	0.090	0.520	0.206

As the results of table 1 revealed, the research data have normal distribution. In order to test the research hypotheses, t-test was employed. The results of this test are presented in table 3. The hypotheses whose average is less than 3.00 is rejected and whose average is more than 3.00 is accepted.

**Table 2: the results of t-test**

	t-value: 3.000					
	t	df	Sig	Difference of average	Confidence distance	
<b>Goals of curriculum</b>	37.752	199	0.000	1.11534	1.0932	1.2137
<b>Content of curriculum</b>	26.639	199	0.000	1.11767	0.0349	1.2004
<b>Teaching method</b>	14.318	199	0.000	0.72876	0.7138	0.9419
<b>Authoritative style</b>	23.718	199	0.000	1.04417	0.9574	1.1310
<b>Arbitrary style</b>	28.837	193	0.000	0.97582	0.9116	1.0454
<b>Convenient style</b>	-7.829	193	0.000	-0.25593	-0.3454	-0.2064
<b>Upbringing</b>	-0.878	193	0.381	-0.04656	-0.1512	0.0581
<b>Happiness</b>	24.272	193	0.000	0.72592	0.6669	0.7849

The findings of table 2 indicated that the average of all research variables (except arbitrary and convenience styles) was higher than moderate level (3.00). Therefore, the H0 is rejected and H1 is supported.

Finally, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used for testing the correlation among research variables. The correlation may be between -1 and +1. The negative quantity refers to negative correlation and vice versa. The findings of table 3 revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between curriculum and happiness. Also the findings showed that there is a significant negative relationship between upbringing and happiness. A significant positive relationship was observed between curriculum and happiness and a significant negative relationship was observed between upbringing and happiness. In addition, significant positive relationships were observed among goals, teaching methods, content, and evaluation with happiness. On the other hand, significant negative relationships were observed among arbitrary and convenience styles with happiness. Also significant relationships were observed among content and evaluation with happiness. Finally, any significant relationships were not observed between arbitrary style and happiness.

**Table 3: the results of Pearson Correlation Coefficient**

		Curriculum	Upbringing	Happiness
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Pearson correlation</b>	1	-0.145*	0.387**
	<b>Sig</b>	200	0.044	0.000
	<b>Frequency</b>		194	194
<b>Upbringing</b>	<b>Pearson correlation</b>	0.145*	1	-0.477**
	<b>Sig</b>	0.044		0.000
	<b>Frequency</b>	194	194	188
<b>Happiness</b>	<b>Pearson correlation</b>	0.387**	-0.477**	1
	<b>Sig</b>	0.000	0.000	
	<b>Frequency</b>	194	188	194

\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$

\*  $p \leq 0.05$

The results of secondary questions are indicated in table 4. The significance of correlation among all research variables (except arbitrary and convenient styles) is less than 0.05. This means that there are significant correlations among research variables.

**Table: the results of Pearson Correlation coefficient for secondary questions**

Variable: happiness	Goals of curriculum	Content of curriculum	Teaching method	Evaluative method	Authoritative style	Arbitrary style	Convenient style
<b>Pearson Correlation coefficient</b>	0.452**	0.411**	0.441**	0.582**	-0.222**	0.078**	-0.444**
<b>Sig</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.289	0.000
<b>Frequency</b>	194	194	194	194	188	188	188

\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$

\*  $p \leq 0.05$

The results of regression test are presented in table 5.

**Table 5: the results of regression test**

	Curriculum and upbringing	Goals of curriculum	Content of curriculum	Teaching method	Evaluative method	Authoritative style	Arbitrary style	Convenient style
<b>Regression model</b>	31.80	20	16.4	19	33.5	4.4	-	19.30

The results of table 5 revealed that there is not any significant relationship between arbitrary style and happiness.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

Curriculum is one of the main effective factors on the student happiness. The reason is that students consume a large part of their time in the schools. However, educational courses and curriculum are the main part of school programs. On the other hand, efficiency of any educational system depends on designed curriculum. Curriculum refers to the educational content which should be learned by students and its sound methods and time scale (Khosravizade, Sene, and Haghdadi, 2011: 164). Parents and upbringing styles are two important sources of student happiness. In this respect, upbringing styles can be grouped in three sets including arbitrary, authoritative, and convenient styles. It should be noted that each of the above-mentioned styles had its own outcomes.

The present study was aimed to investigate the relationship among preschool curriculum, upbringing style, and happiness of preschool students. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between curriculum and happiness. Also the findings showed that there is a significant negative relationship between upbringing style and happiness. This part of our findings is supported by past researchers such as Gilpin (2008), Brien (2010), Stiglbauer et al. (2013). Another part of our findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between curriculum and happiness of learners. These findings are supported by past researchers such as Izer et al. (2005), Simons and Conger (2007), Gris (2010), Hasnain et al. (2013). Our findings also revealed that there are significant relationships among goals of curriculum, content of curriculum, and teaching methods. These findings are supported by Stiglbauer et al. (2013), Brien (2010), Crowther (2008), Gremlin (2003), and Saber (2008). Another part of our findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between evaluation methods and happiness. This part of our findings is supported by Crowther (2008) and Wolk (2008). The findings also revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between arbitrary and convenient style with happiness. This part of our findings is supported by Bagherpour et al. (2007), Dabiri et al. (2011). Finally, our findings

revealed that there is a significant between arbitrary style and happiness. This part of our findings is supported Delavar et al. (2012), Suldo and Huebner (2004), Izer et al. (2005).

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