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### Surveying the Relationship between Happiness, Self-Efficacy and Vocational Capability of Elementary School Teachers

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#### A B S T R A C T

This study aimed to explore the relationship between happiness, self-efficacy and vocational capability of elementary school teachers of District 2 of Bandar Abbas. The research method was correlation-based and descriptive and the statistical population of the study consisted of 150 teachers of elementary school of District 2 of Bandar Abbas, and the volume of calculated sample was 108 students who were selected by available random sampling. In this study, three questionnaires were used: Schweitzer and Jerusalem's General Self-Efficacy Scale (1995), Oxford happiness and capability of Spritzer. According to the research findings, a significant and positive correlation was observed between self-efficacy with happiness and capability and between happiness and capability. The teachers' vocational capability has a strong and significant relationship with happiness and their self-efficacy.

**Keywords:** Happiness, Self-Efficacy, Vocational Capability.

#### INTRODUCTION

Work and human beings are two inseparable and main principals that should be programmed in an appropriate way with each other. The lack of appropriation and conformity between the capabilities of human beings and the job that they do or their responsibility cause many problems to occur such as: the incidence of physical and mental damages. This would result in lower of labor productivity. Today, the issue of self-efficacy and lack of happiness and vocational capability is one of the common issues in work environments. Unfortunately, this situation is very common in the business world and new life and this construct is the product of several factors so that identifying these factors can play an effective role in controlling it. By knowing the volume and how the effective and involved factors in the capability of employees and having the necessary knowledge in this area, the managers will be able to obtain the necessary preparations for making the working

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environment normal. In other words, reforming the administrative procedures which lead to corresponding changes in the workplace can reduce the sense of vocational inability of employees in its turn, as well as its complications such as: delay, sequence absences, resign and leaving the workplace. Among the production factors (capital, land and manpower), the most valuable and the rarest factor is human resources. Neglecting the efficiency of manpower and complete attention to other factors not only cause the reduction of efficacy and effectiveness in organization, but also cause an increase of damages, incidents and dissatisfaction in manpower. When the employees join to the organization, a series of demands, needs, desires and past experiences that are created by job expectations are with them<sup>1</sup>.

One of the positive emotions in humankind is happiness and joys that affect thoughts, feelings and behavior of human beings. Sense of happiness has a positive effect on various aspects of life such as physical health, longevity, educational performance, the process of socialization, creative thinking, problem solving ability and mental health. On the other hand, physical activity, psychological characteristics and environment traits in which one lives and religiosity plays an important and effective role on his sense of happiness. According to Lazarus and Folk man (1984), the happy people have thoughts and behaviors that are consistent and helpful, they watch the affaires with clear visibility, say prayers and meditations, show a directly endeavor to solve their problems and timely request a help from others. On the other hand, the unhappy people think and act in destructive ways, immerse in fantasy, blame themselves and others and avoid trying to solve the problem. In the other group of study, we found that the way people achieve happiness and success is achieving to their goals and aspirations and successfulness in achieving these goals and values depends on adopting appropriate strategies and coping styles<sup>2</sup>.

Happiness and peace of mind create the ground for thought and wisdom fertility. The people who are happy feel more secure, make the decision easier, have more participation spirit and are more satisfied than those who live with him<sup>3</sup>. Happiness or joy is a psychological concept that has different concepts and dimensions. Psychologists, such as Argyle, know happiness as the combination of having positive effect and lack of having negative effect and life satisfaction. In the definition of Argyle, the components of happiness included life satisfaction, lack of negative effect and happiness. Joy is the emotional aspect of happiness and life satisfaction is its cognitive aspect<sup>4</sup>.

As Vienna Phone (2010) points out, happiness and in an expression, life satisfaction, is accounted as the main elements of subjective well-being. Cummins also believes that happiness actually constitutes a substantial part of the concept of subjective well-being. Now, a general area of psychology as positive psychology, is been devoted to understand the process of human happiness<sup>3</sup>.

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It seems that there is a logical relationship between the vocational capability as a behavior indicator among the teachers and happiness that this relationship has been confirmed in several studies. For example, Mehdi Lu et al (2012) in a study that has been done on a sample of university students of Islamic Azad University found out that the ability is one of the strongest predictive factors of happiness and satisfaction among university students. About this topic, the intuition of Claus in 2011, after surveying an extensive sample among different American universities, concluded that the scores and educational average and totally the ability of university students have significant relationship with satisfaction and happiness. In a study on the students of Tehran University of Medical Sciences, there was a significant relationship between educational status, job satisfaction and happiness, as they were found. For the university students, study and education are as numerous kinds of work. So, when the topic is about the happiness and satisfaction among the students, the job satisfaction should be considered as well<sup>5</sup>. Bowling and Windsor concluded in their study conducted on the English language university students that the scale of education satisfaction, as an indicator of job satisfaction among university students, has a close relationship with happiness and life satisfaction between them<sup>6</sup>.

Another component which can be associated with success and vocational capability of teachers is a sense of self-efficacy. In fact, self-efficacy is individual beliefs about the abilities to choose the selected performance levels to be the guidance and former of the effective events on the life of an individual<sup>7</sup>. These beliefs would influence the method of thinking, feeling, motivation or behavior of individuals. The strong feeling of self-efficacy cause the improvement of individual positive opinions and better participation, effectiveness of person in doing activities, setting goals and work commitment<sup>8</sup>.

The concept of self-efficacy is located in the center of Bandura's social cognitive theory. Bandura focuses on the role of observation learning, social experience, and reciprocal determinism in development of personality. According to Bandura's theory, attitudes, abilities and cognitive skills of each person are form "self-system". This system plays the main role in how we perceive and how we behave in response to it in different situations. Self-efficacy is an important part of the "self-system".

Self-efficacy is defined as: "one's belief in his capabilities to organize and carry out a series of required activities to manage different circumstances and situations" (Bandura, 1995). As Bandura and other researchers have shown, self-efficacy implicates on almost everything from psychological states to behavior and motivation. People, who believe they can achieve the desired results with their actions, feel more authority in facing with problems. Also people, with high qualifications in performing a task, but have low beliefs towards their abilities, do less effort to complete the task. In other words, when the capacity is high, but self-efficacy is low, there will be a little possibility to do homework or dealing with a specific situation. Despite this, considerable number of researchers and

psychologist has used the concept of general self-efficacy in the meaning of beliefs and judgments of individuals about their overall ability and competency in the face of events or stressful and threatening situations<sup>4</sup>.

General self-efficacy measurement has a special importance in situations like job capability evaluation that can have various dimensions and depends on several factors. Apparently, previous successful or unsuccessful experiences in one's life can create a relatively stable feeling, depending on the situation, extendable and measurable in the field of self-efficacy and can be counted as a good predictor for the job capability of teachers. Self-efficacy, with positive results on the mental health of people, can be taken into account as an effective factor in subjective well-being or happiness of people. Many studies have shown that people with higher self-efficacy feel more satisfaction in life, and will have more happiness in their life as well. Due to the foregoing topics, happiness and self-efficacy are considered such as the influencing variables in the success and progress of teachers' capability. Unfortunately, despite the importance of these concepts in evaluating the performance of teachers, little research has been done in this area [5]. Thus, given the importance of happiness and self-efficacy' concepts in the job capability of teachers, and lack of enough study in this field, especially in Iran, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between these components among a group of elementary school teachers of District 2 of Bandar Abbas (in Iran).

Another variable that is stated in addition to self-efficacy and happiness is job capability. Job capability means transferring the official authority and delegating the authority so that the employees can contribute to achieving the goals of the organization. Empowerment is the power of making decisions within specific boundaries. In the process of empowerment, the director will grant a part of authorities of decision making to employees. In fact, these are managers who increase the empowerment of employees. Consistent with the organizational changes and discuss of empowerment in business and industry, some changes have been established in education and commerce; in other words, the empowerment, has been entered to the educational organizations as well (Robbins 1994). Bennis and Nanvs (1985) believed that empowered people feel significance. They do consider value for the purpose and activities that they are employed for<sup>4</sup>.

Capability is interpreted as a performance close to perfect in an activity and job capability is defined as power, freedom, knowledge and skills of employees to make decisions in doing the tasks effectively<sup>9</sup>.

Accordingly, empowerment is the process of the increase of self- efficiently of the members of the organization through identifying and indicating the conditions that create the feeling of using power among the personnel of organization. Empowerment is a process in which the exchange of information and views can be conducted easily and objectives are defined<sup>10</sup>.

Empowerment approaches are divided into two categories of mechanical and organic and should be done based on a difference between the situational

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characteristics and perceptions of employees, and managerial actions such as sharing of personnel in information, knowledge and bonuses. They are just a set of actions that may be necessary for vocational capability of employees, but are not sufficient and the beliefs and feelings of employees should be considered as well<sup>11</sup>.

The study have been surveyed in relation to investigating the teachers capability in different researches, the relationship of teacher capabilities with job satisfaction, participation in making decisions, organizational commitment, conflict, educational activities, students' academic achievement, leadership style of training managers, the effect on the ability of teachers to facilitate the organizational democratic environment, participation in decision making and capability of teachers and the use of kinds of authority by moderators. Some studies showed that the empowering of teachers is more effective when his profession promotion is the axis and empowerment has at least two organizational and class dimensions and the teacher's capability can be a key influencing factor on school effectiveness. Research findings in the field of the effects of teachers' capability on school have shown that capability is a prerequisite condition for creating real changes in teaching methods and educational activities and the quality of educational activities and academic performance of school students is indirectly affected by the organization of schools and education<sup>12</sup>.

Several researches focused to investigate the relationship of these variables with each other. Asghari et al<sup>13</sup> showed in the study that there is a direct relationship between "empowerment" and "self-efficacy" and there is an interactive relationship between "empowerment" and "job satisfaction". In another study, Rice (1994), Taylor and Tashakori<sup>15</sup>, Oatmeal and shorts Schneider<sup>16</sup> examined the relationship between empowerment and self-efficacy with job satisfaction. The results showed a significant relationship between these variables with each other. In another study, Paezi<sup>17</sup> came to the conclusion that self-assertiveness gives human beings the sense of self-efficacy and internal control and these emotions boost our self-confidence and self-esteem in opposing interactions with others. Folger and Rios<sup>18</sup> researches showed that self-efficacy has deserving role in people's behavior and positive attitudes. In addition, Bamberger and Biroon<sup>19</sup> began to evaluate the effectiveness of empowerment on pleasance and job performance. The results showed that empowerment effects pleasance and job performance greatly.

According to what was expressed, this research seeks to assess the relationship between self-efficacy, empowerment and happiness among the elementary school teachers.

Theoretic framework of present study is based on social-cognitive theory in evaluating the capability of teachers. This theory provides a helpful framework for analyzing the sense of people from the scale of their empowerment and has emphasized on the perception and imagination of people from their job environment<sup>20</sup>. Vocational capability is defined based on personal perceptions of people and are found on intrinsic motivation process rather than performing the

job duties<sup>21</sup>. These people actively interpret the environmental events instead of being independent or under the control of their environments, and are affected by their perception from the environment instead of some objective realities. In order to make people feel strong, they should understand that the conditions is provided for making them powerful. These approach theorists believe that occupational capabilities are a multidimensional subject which include the impact of affecting, competencies, significance, individual autonomy and trust and reflect the orientation of the person towards his work and his role in the organization. This theory can be an appropriate basis for surveying the strategies of vocational capability growth that in order for the people to feel powerful on its basis, the necessary circumstances and grounds should be provided for them and the organization, management and staff has required preparation. Based on this, the professional, organizational and management activities can be underlie for the capability of the teachers<sup>12</sup>.

With regard to what was mentioned above, and since there is no study entitled as the present study for the Education of Bandar Abbas so far, the basic subject of present study is been presented as surveying the relationship between vocational capability with happiness and self-efficacy of elementary school teachers in the frame of the following hypothesis.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is descriptive research based on the purpose and content that is done by correlation method. The statistical population consisted of all elementary school teachers of Bandar Abbas that were teaching in the 2015-16 academic years and were selected among 108 people through two-stage cluster sampling and the data were obtained by excluding 10 incomplete questionnaires of 98 samples of people.

### **Measuring tool**

1. Spritzer psychological and empowerment questionnaires: Psychological empowerment scale is been made in 1995. Spritzer questionnaire has four components (significance, competence, independence and effectiveness) and 12 questions that assasse the psychological empowerment of staff by 6 degree scale. Horabadi<sup>22</sup> reported Alpha coefficient as 0.88. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to calculate reliability of the questionnaire. This method is used to calculate the internal consistency of measurement tools such as questionnaires or tests that measure various properties. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated by using its formula as 0.92. Two examples of this questionnaire' questions are: "If I try sufficiently, I will be able to solve the hard problems" and "if someone opposes me, I can find a way to achieve what I want ".

2. General Self-Efficacy Scale: General Self-Efficacy Scale of Schweitzer and Jerusalem (1995) was designed in German. This scale had 20 items with two separate subscales of "general self-efficacy and social self-efficacy" which was

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changed into a general 10-item self-efficacy scale in 1981 and so far has been translated to 28 languages including English and Farsi and is been normalized in these languages. Schweitzer presented a collected data from a sample of 1660 Germany adults about this scale; average scores in his index were as 29.82 and its standard deviation was as 4.6. For the German-language version, the general self-efficacy scale has reported a high internal consistency extent and high retest reliability. General self-efficacy retest reliability is obtained with run on five different samples in a period of 6 months as 0.47, in the period of a year as 0.55 to 0.70 and during a period of two years as 0.47 to 0.63<sup>4</sup>. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha was obtained as 0.82. Two examples of the questions of this questionnaire are: "What I do has a lot of sense to me" and "What I do is very important to me."

3. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire: For the first time, Argyle Voloo (1998) made this 29-item questionnaire and it has been used widely in the United Kingdom<sup>23</sup>. The questions has 4 alternatives for each (a, b, c, d) which they get 1,2,3,4 scores respectively and as a result the final score is located between zero and 78. Various researches show the retest reliability of the questionnaire at an acceptable level. For example, in some surveys the retest reliability has been reported as 0.81 after four months, as 0.67 after five months and as 0.53 after six months<sup>24</sup>. In this study, the reliability of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire by Cronbach's alpha was obtained at a rate of 0.91 to assess the internal consistency. Samples of the questions of questionnaire are: "I feel happy so much", "I feel happy" and "I am very happy."

In order to do this research, one district between 2 districts of Bandar Abbas and four girl schools and four boy schools in that district were selected randomly. After selecting participants, the teachers completed the questionnaires individually in the form of self-report. Collected data were analyzed through Pearson correlation and regression analysis.

## RESULTS

To analyze the results, at first, we study the mean and standard deviation of happiness, self-efficacy and vocational capability variables in the sample.

**Table 1.** The mean and standard deviation, happiness, self-efficacy and vocational capability of elementary school teachers

Statistical criterions of variables	Mean	Standard deviation	The number of sample
Happiness	58.3	7.12	98
Self-efficacy	40.02	3.43	98
Vocational capability	110.08	11.64	98

**Table 2.** Results of the correlation coefficient of relationship between the variables of happiness, self-efficacy and vocational capability of elementary school teachers

variables	frequency	R	Significant level
Happiness and self-efficacy	98	0.84	0.001
Happiness and vocational capability	98	0.76	0.001
Vocational capability and self-efficacy	98	0.94	0.001

This table shows that all the variables have a significant relationship with each other. As it is seen in this table, the obtained coefficients indicate a significant and direct relationship between happiness and self-efficacy ( $P < 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.84$ ), between happiness and vocational capability ( $P < 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.76$ ), between vocational capability and self-efficacy ( $P < 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.94$ ). So, it means that by increasing each one of the variables, the other would increase and by decreasing each one, the other would decrease as well. According to the results, a significant positive correlation between vocational capability with happiness and self-efficacy and between happiness and empowerment is indicated ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

**Table 3.** Significance of prediction between self-efficacy, vocational capability and happiness

	Freedom degree	Total squares	F	Mean squares	Significant level
<b>Regression</b>	3	6359.86	13.95	2280.95	0.0001
<b>Remnant</b>	95	14555.12	-	201.137	-
<b>Total</b>	98	23608.99	-	-	-

Criterion variable: vocational capability

Table 3 shows a significant relationship between the predicting scores of vocational capability with self-efficacy and happiness ( $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ,  $F = 13.95$ ).

**Table 4.** Standard and nonstandard correlation coefficient table

	Beta	T	Significant level
<b>Constant number</b>		0.699	0.504
<b>Happiness</b>	0.294	3.2	0.005
<b>Self-efficacy</b>	0.29	0.805	0.006
<b>Vocational capability</b>	0.061	0.608	0.554

Criterion variable: Vocational capability

In Table 4, crude and standardized coefficients of regression equation have changed to t and the significance is been specified. The results show that if all of variables are evaluated and entered in the equation simultaneously, self-efficacy and teacher happiness will have a significant relationship with his vocational capability ( $p = 0.005$ ,  $p =$  and  $0.006$  respectively).

Table 4 shows that happiness and self-efficacy scores have an impact on vocational capability and they could be extended to the population. Finally, the results of tables 3 and 4 would explain occupational capabilities, happiness and self-efficacy of teachers.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to evaluate the self-efficacy and happiness on the vocational capability among elementary school teachers. The results showed that vocational capability has a significant relationship with self-efficacy. The consistency of



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findings of this study and other researches can be explained in the way that by empowering the teachers, the administrators can cite other goals, they will have such employees that are very active and responsible, they would become aware of their abilities and merits, and because they think that they are effective and efficient, they can feel better about themselves. In this regard, Folger and Rios<sup>18</sup> believed that empowered people feel significance. They do value for the purpose and activities that are employed for. Their ideals and standards seem homogenous with what they are doing, and the action seems important in value system. Bamberger and Biroon<sup>19</sup> show in a research that happiness in the workplace is significantly associated with reduced job stress and increasing happiness leads to the increase of employees' satisfaction. The results also showed that vocational capability and self-efficacy have a significant relationship with happiness and obtained results are consistent with the results of researches of Chen and colleagues<sup>24</sup>, Adymv<sup>25</sup>, Folger and Rios<sup>18</sup> and Bamberger and Biroon<sup>19</sup>, Taylor and Tashakori<sup>15</sup>, Rice and Schneider<sup>14</sup>. When teachers are happy and self-efficient, they will feel better about their jobs and will put a better ability in place. In this regard, the results of Shank<sup>26</sup> showed that people with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to struggle in facing with problems and when they have the necessary skills, do insist on an assignment. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is an important factor for the successful performance of an operation. He believes that the self-efficacy is a constructive power that with its cognitive, emotional, and human behavior skills is somehow organized effectively to achieve different objectives. Accordingly, the more a teacher has a better feeling about his abilities in teaching, the more he will be able to act better. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more internally motivated and implement new methods and spent more time to prepare the class. The other result of this study is that there is a significant relationship between happiness and self-efficacy among teachers, which is in the line of the researches of Bahraini and colleagues<sup>27</sup> and Paezi<sup>15</sup>.

In addition, the results of regression analysis showed that if all the variables come into the equation together, the vocational capability has a significant relationship with two other variables (self-efficacy, happiness) and these results are in the line of the researches of Tavakoli et al<sup>28</sup>. In explaining the obtained results, it should be said that with self-efficacy, the employees can manage their relationship better, also can deal with conflicts easily, with better understanding and these factors can leads to more intimate communication and as a result, can lead to happiness in people. This is more expected particularly in a condition where the environment provides the necessary and sufficient condition for it<sup>29</sup>. In this context, Killkus<sup>30</sup> believes that self-expression is extensively involved in interpersonal relationships and boosting behaviors such as dependent, self-esteem and self-efficacy in individual. The findings of this study are in the line of

the results of Zahedi<sup>31</sup>, and Abdullahi<sup>11</sup> that emphasize on the dimension of psychological and organizational vocational capabilities. Lampy and Franco<sup>32</sup>, and Ning and Zhang et al<sup>33</sup> have found a significant relationship between the dimensions of empowerment with vocational capability in their researches. Empowered people will do better rather than less formidable people. This is rooted in that the empowerment increases the start of vocational behaviors and effort practices for these tasks. In particular, high levels of psychological empowerment lead to much more and harder try of effortful practices and greater flexibility.

According to what was said, creating environments in school in which the teachers acquire competencies increases their knowledge and skills; and improve their professional basis and they believe that they have the capacity to apply strategies and methods that promotes the learning of students and causes the empowerment and self-efficacy. For this purpose, the attention of the authorities to provide programs that increase the happiness level of teachers and are parallel to it will increase the scale of job satisfaction of teachers as an important factor in promoting the productivity and empowerment. Teachers who are satisfied with their work and do not have any disturbance for various problems and do not face the enormous problems of life, are able to teach more smoothly and better. These relying facts are opposing to interaction of self-efficacy components with vocational capability and happiness of teachers in the school environments. Moreover, it considers more attention for the officials and top managers to teacher's personality traits and abilities. In order to save vocational motivation and high capability of elementary school teachers, especially at the level of teachers with high education, it is suggested that the explanation of organizational duties be reviewed repeatedly and determined, in addition to considering new expectations from the role of elementary school teachers, and its exact framework in order for avoiding imposition of any personal tasting or outside the duties interference or imposition of the affair out of duties framework.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended to select and evaluate teachers in other sections in future researches. In addition, repeating this study in other organizations and different working situations is necessary in order to know whether the obtained correlations of this study are true or not in other situations. Another suggestion is that it is better to consider variables such as age, education and job experience in the next studies.

### **Limitations:**

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Finally, it is worth mentioning that this study has limitations such as restrictions in tastes that only elementary school teachers of District 2 of Bandar Abbas were considered and their number was low and on the other hand, measurement tools were not on the same level for everyone in terms of understanding, and this leads to a reduction in results generalizing power. It is better to carry out research on other groups with more number and eliminate the restriction by using other tools.

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