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## Subjective well-being and its sub-scales among students: The study of role of creativity and self-efficacy



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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the subjective well-being and its sub-scales among students: the study of role of creativity and self-efficacy. The sample of the study consisted of 355 university students (176 female/179 male) from University of Kashan who were selected based on stratified sampling proportional to population volume. To assess creativity, Creativity Questionnaire (1994), to assess the self-efficacy, general self-efficacy scale (1982) and to assess subjective well-being and its sub-scales, subjective well-being questionnaire (2003) was used. Significant tests and analysis of data were performed by SPSS 18 software using regression analysis stepwise. The results showed that there was a significant relation between the creativity and subjective, emotional, psychological and social well-being. Also self-efficacy and subjective well-being and its dimensions were significantly related. Regression analysis results demonstrated the predictive capability of subjective well-being through the creativity and self-efficacy. Given to the significant relationship between subjective well-being and creativity and self-efficacy, findings have important implications for improving students' subjective well-being by strengthening self-efficacy and optimizing creativity occurring conditions.

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## 1. Introduction

Well-being is a subject that has occupied thinkers' minds for centuries and recently has been the focal point of numerous branches of psychology including positive psychology (Aghababaei & Farahani, 2011).

Subjective well-being (SWB) is one of the most attractive fields in modern psychology. A sudden increase of interest for studying this phenomenon has especially been expressed in the last 10 years, from establishing positive psychology as a scientific discipline (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002) and recognizing the significance of SWB on the level of an individual and the society as a whole (Diener & Seligman, 2004; Veenhoven, 2004).

The SWB is defined as the personal assessment and perception of their quality of life (including the quality of their social, psychological and emotional interactions) (George, 2000) and provides growth of balance and human health and paves a way to develop her talent more accurately and extensively (Peyvastegar, Dastjerdi, & Dehshiri, 2010). SWB includes important principles that can be identified through the impact of emotions on all aspects of human behavior and progress (including physical and mental health, education and skills development, social competence and creating positive social relationships) (Bridges, Margie, & Zaff, 2002). This concept has cognitive and emotional components. Cognitive aspect includes individuals' cognitive appraisal of life satisfaction and emotional aspect includes enjoying the most positive affect and the least

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negative affect (Eid & Larson, 2008). According to Keyes and Magyar-Moe (2003) classification there are three sub-scales for SWB: emotional, psychological and social. The World Federation defines emotional well-being as “a form of subjective well being, when individuals feel that they are coping, fairly in control of their lives, able to face challenges, and take on responsibility” (Funk, Drew, Freeman, & Faydi, 2010). Ryff (1995) defines psychological well-being as “striving for perfection in order to prove true potentials of individual”. In this point of view, well-being means the effort for enhancement and transcendence that flourish in establishment of personal potentials and talents. Factors of psychological well-being are consisted of following items: autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989). Keyes (1998) proposes that well-being has a social foundation, and offers the following definition: ‘Social well-being is the appraisal of one’s circumstance and function in society’ (p. 122). Social well-being is composed of the following five elements: social integration, social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization and social coherence.

One of the variables that are associated with individuals’ SWB is creativity (Collins, 2006; McLellan, Galton, Steward, & Page, 2012). Creativity is a complex phenomenon that prompted researchers to create varying definitions (Matuga, 2004). In core of these definitions is often the notion that creativity enables a person the production of novel and useful ideas (Runco, 2004). Torrance and Goff (1986) with classification of Creativity writes: This skill is concisely composed of four main factors, fluidity (talent to produce many ideas), elaboration (talent of attending to detail), and originality (talent to produce new, unusual and fresh ideas), flexibility (talent to produce different ideas or ways). Many studies have shown that happy mood simplifies the ability to think to solve problems in new ways and negative affect prevents the ability of flexible thinking (Gasper, 2003). The positive emotion broadens people’s attention, makes them aware of broader social and physical environment and makes people more creative than usual situations (Carr, 2003). It is noteworthy that positive emotions come from new insights so that Sternberg (1988) proposes personal satisfaction and probably happiness of others as the result of creative thinking. Newton (2013) argued emotions can make a difference to thought. Based on Greaves and Farbus’s (2006) research development and encouragement of creative activities increase well-being and positive changes in elderly health. Collins (2006) argues that the creativity predicts positive effect, physical health, psychological adjustment, and vivacity. In Bostic’s opinion (2003) creativity also has the power of such prediction. In a meta-analysis of 60 experimental and 10 non-experimental studies, results have shown that positive mood enhances creativity (Davis, 2009). Baas and colleagues (2008) in a meta-analysis of 102 studies concluded that positive mood causes more creativity than the neutral mood. Maltz (1984) believes that by the help of creative thinking we contribute to joy and it provides means to reduce hardships and difficulties of life.

Self-efficacy is another variable that is closely related to the well-being (Bhupinder & Rakhi, 2009; Datu, 2012). This concept was developed by Bandura. Self-efficacy is “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations.” In other words, self-efficacy is a person’s belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation. Bandura described these beliefs as determinants of how people think, behave, and feel (Bandura, 1994).

About direct impact of self-efficacy believes on emotional experiences, Bandura (1997) believes that these beliefs effect emotional experiences through thoughts, actions, or emotions orientation. People with low self-efficacy may believe that accidents and incidents are harder than what they really are, and this will lead to increased stress and anxiety. High self-efficacy is related, for example, to the regulation of the stress process, to higher self-esteem, better well-being, better physical condition, better adaptation to and recovery from acute and chronic diseases (Bandura, 1997; Bisschop, Knegsman, Beekman, & Deeg, 2004).

In fact, high sense of self-efficacy improved personal health, ability to perform the duties and tasks in various ways. People, who are confident in their abilities, consider difficult tasks as challenges that must be conquered. Instead of seeing them threatening and avoiding them, they choose challenging goals and remain firmly committed to fulfill them. They are confident in their ability to harness the potential threats, to adapt well with the conditions and to experience less anxiety and depression and greater psychological well-being (Argyle & Lu, 1990). Also, in this case, Raggi, Leonardi, Mantegazza, Casale, and Fioravanti (2010) showed that having a sense of control over events and high self-efficacy leads to higher levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction.

## 2. Research questions

- I. Is there significant relation between the creativity and SWB and its sub-scales?
- II. Is there significant relation between the self-efficacy and SWB and its sub-scales?
- III. Which is more effective to predict of SWB: creativity or self-efficacy?

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Population and sample

This research was a descriptive – correlational study. Statistical population consisted of all students from University of Kashan, Iran, who were from four faculties, including Human Sciences, Engineering, Architecture, and Art & Basic Sciences. Participants selected from the academic year 2012–2013. Research sample included 355 students (176 female (49.6%), and

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