

Goal Orientation as a Predictor of Student Happiness in Senior Secondary School Level

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Abstract :

The present study explores the relationship between goal orientation and happiness among senior secondary school students in Kamrup Metropolitan District, Assam. Grounded in the belief that happiness and goal orientation are interlinked dimensions of psychological well-being, the study aims to assess levels of happiness and goal orientation, analyse differences across gender, type of institution and stream of study and determine the predictive power of goal orientation on happiness. For the present study, descriptive and correlational research design has been used. Data was collected from 620 students of class XII standard, selected through stratified random sampling from 16 schools (9 government and 7 private) from a total population of 2,586. Two standardized tools- Happiness scale (HS-RHMJ) and Goal Orientation scale (GOS-ES) were used, both demonstrating high reliability (0.80 and 0.78 respectively). For descriptive statistics mean, standard deviation, t -value and level of significance, r value and F -value have been calculated. The findings have revealed significant correlations between student's happiness and goal orientation dimensions. The study also seeks to identify demographic variations that may affect student's happiness levels. The study found out that a maximum portion of students experience moderate levels of happiness and goal orientation. It indicates the need of strengthening goal-oriented behaviour in educational platforms. The result will contribute to understanding adolescent psychological development and provide insights for educators and policymakers to foster positive learning environments that support both academic success and emotional well-being.

Keywords: Happiness, Goal Orientation, Senior Secondary Students, Well-being

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1. Introduction:

India holds the 126th position among 143 nations, with an average life satisfaction score of 4.389 out of 10 as stated in the 2024 World Happiness Report.

This low ranking reflects challenges such as high youth unemployment, academic pressure and limited access to mental health resources. Study conducted by Sapien lab (2013) found that youth aged 18-24 in India struggle more with mental health than older adults. Mental health and happiness are deeply interconnected, as a stable and positive mental state often fosters greater emotional well-being and happiness. Happiness represents the natural condition of the human mind and has always been the ultimate pursuit of every person throughout history (Singh, 2012). While happiness may resemble pleasure, the two are distinct, happiness arises internally, whereas pleasure is derived from external experiences. Veenhoven (2009) defines happiness as the overall positive assessment of one's life, which involves both cognitive judgments and emotional experiences, as also noted by Diener (1984). Recent studies indicate that individuals with high happiness levels tend to experience not only positive emotions but also enjoy better health and stronger social connections (Diener & Scollon, 2014). According to UNESCO, happiness in schools is not merely about pleasure but involves creating supportive learning environments that promote health and well-being for individuals, families and communities.

Happiness in individuals is often closely linked to goal orientation, as having clear, purposeful goals can foster motivation, self-esteem, and a sense of fulfilment. Goals are important part for human being to remain motivated. They guide young people's cognition and affect and instigate, direct and maintain their behaviour particularly as they become involved in academic work (Elliot & McGregor 2001; Kaplan & Maehr, 2007). Clear goals provide a sense of direction, which in turn facilitates purposeful planning and progress toward achievement (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). Senior secondary school is an important time in a student's life when they start making big decisions about their future. They face more pressure from studies and social life, and begin to shape their personal identity. Having clear goals helps students stay focused and work toward what they want. When students are happy, they are more likely to choose their own goals without feeling forced. The experiences and choices made at this level often shape their future educational paths, career goals, and life perspectives (Hurlock, 1980 & Santrock, 2018).

Recent studies have examined the complex link between happiness and goal orientation, beginning with Krasko et al. (2019, 2021), who conceptualized both as multidimensional constructs, showing that happiness-related strivings enhance well-being while concerns reduce it. Jowkar (2021) validated this among Iranian students, finding mastery goals positively and performance-avoidance goals negatively associated with happiness, while performance-approach goals had minimal effect. Ehrlich (2021) demonstrated that refining goal-striving motives such as pleasure,

altruism, fear, and necessity can significantly improve psychological functioning. Earlier works by Ricard (2014), Celik (2018), Tan et al. (2020), and Samkan & Talebzadeh (2011) explored happiness in relation to health, motivation, and well-being. In India, Devvrt (2023) and Sonkar (2023) highlighted academic, psychological, and cultural factors, with Happiness Modules improving student outcomes. In Northeast India, Das & Basumatary (2022) and Buragohain & Hazarika (2015) linked happiness to school type and teacher job satisfaction. Impact of goal orientation on motivation, relationships, and academic achievement has been studied internationally by Roebken (2007) and Teruel (2023), and in India by Sharma (2021) and Kavitha (2022). Despite these insights, research gaps remain in cross-cultural validation of happiness frameworks, level of students, methodical approach etc. Studies have hardly been observed throwing lights on relation between goal orientation and happiness of the school going students of Assam specifically at senior secondary level.

Review of literature

Kumar and Sahoo (2024) in their study found that most senior secondary students exhibited an average level of happiness, with female students reporting higher happiness than males. Although happiness showed a positive relationship with academic achievement, this correlation was not statistically significant. Sharma (2021) found that grit, goal orientation, and orientation to happiness play an important role in shaping the well-being of senior secondary school students. Using a descriptive research design, the study added to existing literature by demonstrating that these psychological factors significantly influence students' overall well-being. Krasko and Schweitzer and Luhmann (2020) conducted a study on happiness goal orientation and their associations with wellbeing. The study stated that research on valuing and pursuing happiness has shown mixed results, but these inconsistencies can be clarified by viewing Happiness Goal Orientations (HGO) as multidimensional. The newly developed HGO Scale identifies two dimensions- Happiness-Related Strivings, which involve active pursuit of happiness and relate to higher well-being, and Happiness-Related Concerns, which involve worry about losing happiness and relate to lower well-being. These contrasting patterns show that pursuing happiness can either enhance or undermine well-being depending on the type of orientation involved. Vyas and Prajapati (2020) in their study revealed significant differences in happiness levels based on gender and education level, with boys reporting higher happiness than girls and graduation-level students showing greater happiness than post-graduation students. However, no significant interaction effect was found between gender and level of education on happiness. Nasa (2015) found that while male and female secondary school students do not differ significantly in their goal orientation, urban

students show a significantly stronger goal-oriented approach than rural students. The study also examined how goal orientation relates to academic self-efficacy, help-seeking behaviour, and achievement using descriptive methods, regression analysis, and SEM. Overall, the key result highlights the urban- rural difference in goal orientation. Hasnain, Wazid and Hasan (2014) in their study found that Optimism, Hope, and Happiness together significantly predicted Psychological Well-Being among young adult Assamese males and females, with Hope contributing most for males and Happiness contributing most for females. It also revealed that females scored higher in overall well-being while males scored higher in happiness, with no significant gender differences in Optimism and Hope.

Various studies have been found on happiness and goal orientation in international and national level, but very few studies have been found using both the variables. There are very limited studies performed on happiness at and goal orientation at regional level. Studies on happiness and goal orientation taking different demographic variables- gender, type of institution and stream of study are also limited in nature. Hence, the present study has significance.

2. Research Question

In the light of the above discussion, questions raise, (i) Is there any significant differences exist in levels of goal orientation and happiness across gender, type of institution (government vs. private) and stream of study (Arts vs. Science) of the students? (ii) Is there any relationship between happiness and goal orientation of the secondary school students? (iii) Do goal orientation of the students leads to overall happiness of the students?

Keeping in view the above context and the research question, the statement of this problem of study is stated as-

"Goal Orientation as a Predictor of Student Happiness in Senior Secondary School Level"

3. Objectives of the Study

The study aims to investigate whether levels of goal orientation and happiness of the secondary school students differ across gender, type of institution (government versus private), and stream of study (Arts versus Science). It further attempted to examine the relationship between goal orientation and happiness, and to determine whether goal orientation of the students significantly contributes to their overall happiness

4. Significance of the Study

The United Nations General Assembly recognizes happiness as a vital part of development and promotes a more inclusive and balanced model of economic progress that prioritizes the well-being of individuals. For students, happiness plays a crucial role as they navigate academic pressure, mental health challenges, cyberbullying, and socio-economic differences. It is believed that happier students are better equipped to make career decisions and solve personal problems. This study aims to assess the level of happiness among higher secondary school students and explore its connection with goal orientation. The findings are expected to help students build confidence in their abilities and support efforts to foster happiness among youth.

Goal orientation is essential for students as it provides a clear direction toward achieving their aspirations. It helps them plan their careers and work systematically toward future success. By examining differences in happiness and goal orientation across demographic and academic factors such as gender, type of school, and stream of study, the study seeks to identify groups that may require additional support. The higher secondary stage marks a critical period in a student's life, coinciding with adolescence, a time of significant cognitive, emotional, and social development. Decisions made during this phase can shape their future, making it important to understand their well-being.

Kamrup Metropolitan District, with Guwahati at its centre, offers a rich and diverse environment ideal for studying adolescent happiness. Its cultural and socio-economic variety, along with a growing youth population, makes it a valuable setting for research on student development. Insights from this region can inform policies and practices aimed at enhancing the well-being and success of higher secondary or senior secondary school students.

5. Method of the Study

This descriptive and correlational study investigates the relationship between happiness (dependent variable) and goal orientation (independent variable) among Class XII students under the Assam State School Education Board (ASSEB) in Guwahati city, Kamrup (M) district. It also explores demographic factors such as gender, type of institution, and stream of study. Using stratified random sampling, 620 students were selected from 16 schools (9 government, 7 private), following Taro Yemem's formula from total student population of 2,586. The sample includes 280 boys and 340 girls, with 392 from government and 228 from private schools,

and 475 Arts and 145 Science students. Data were collected using an Information Data Sheet, and adapted versions of the Happiness Scale (HS-RHMJ) by Rastogi & Moorjani (2017), and the Goal Orientation Scale (GOS-ES) by Sreekala E. (2013), with reliability scores of 0.80 and 0.78 respectively. The tools have been adapted as per context of the study following expert's opinion using test-retest method.

Result of the study

Happiness of Senior Secondary School Students

Happiness	Level	Range	No. of Students	Percentage
	Extremely High	298& above	11	1.77%
	High	260-297	168	27.09%
	Average	233-259	272	43.87%
	Low	193-232	148	23.87%
	Extremely Low	162-192	21	3.38%
Total			620	100%

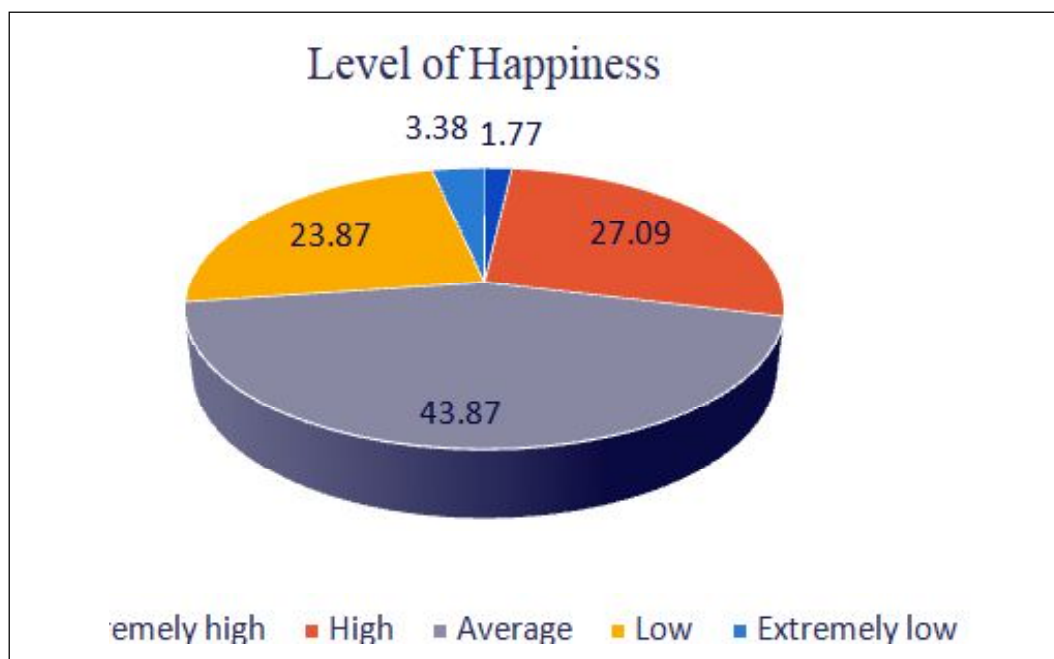


Fig 1: Pie diagram showing happiness level of senior secondary school students

Table 2: Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis on the Happiness of the Senior Secondary School Students (N=620)

Variable	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Happiness	245.84	247.00	26.37	-.385	.388

Table 3: N, Means, SDs and 't' Values of Boys and Girls Senior Secondary School Students on Happiness(N=620)

Variable		N	M	SD	df	t	Level of Significance
Gender	Boys	280	243.10	28.35	618	2.357	0.05
	Girls	340	248.09	24.44			

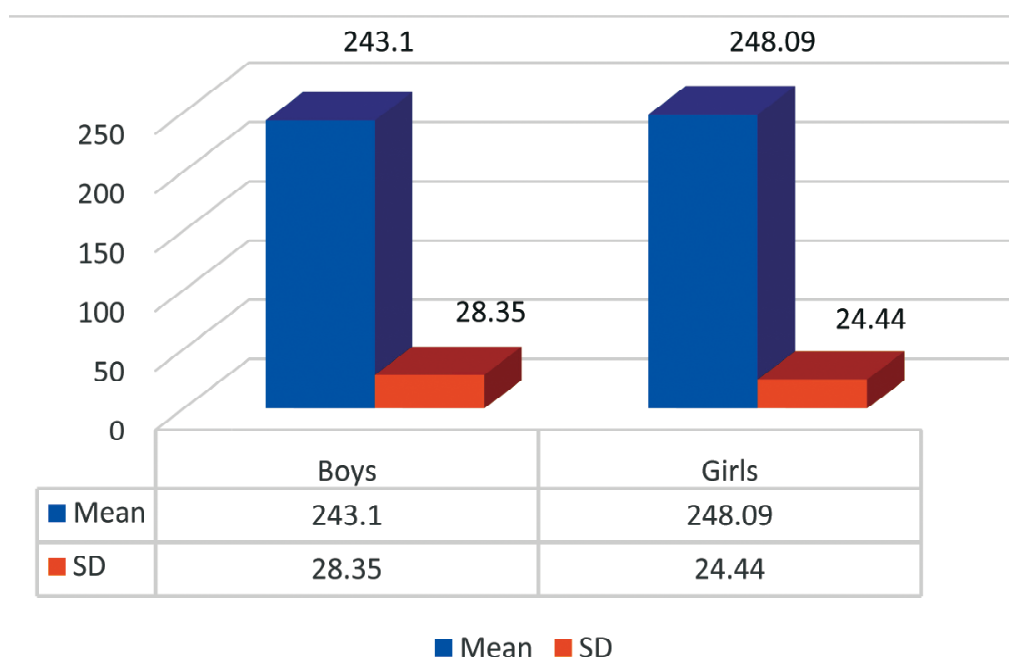


Fig 2: Graphical presentation of Mean score of Boys and Girl students on Happiness

Table 4: Means, SDs and 't' values of boy and girl senior secondary school students on each dimension of happiness
N=620

Sl. No.	Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
1	Career Well-being	Boy	280	57.13	6.29	.324	NS
		Girl	340	57.28	5.79		
2	Subjective Well-being	Boy	280	54.59	8.69	1.77	NS
		Girl	340	55.73	7.22		
3	Social Well-being	Boy	280	42.35	6.95	5.47	0.01
		Girl	340	44.98	4.99		
4	Spiritual Well-being	Boy	280	42.04	6.34	1.41	NS
		Girl	340	42.69	5.29		
5	Emotional Well-being	Boy	280	47.00	6.43	.828	NS
		Girl	340	47.42	6.09		

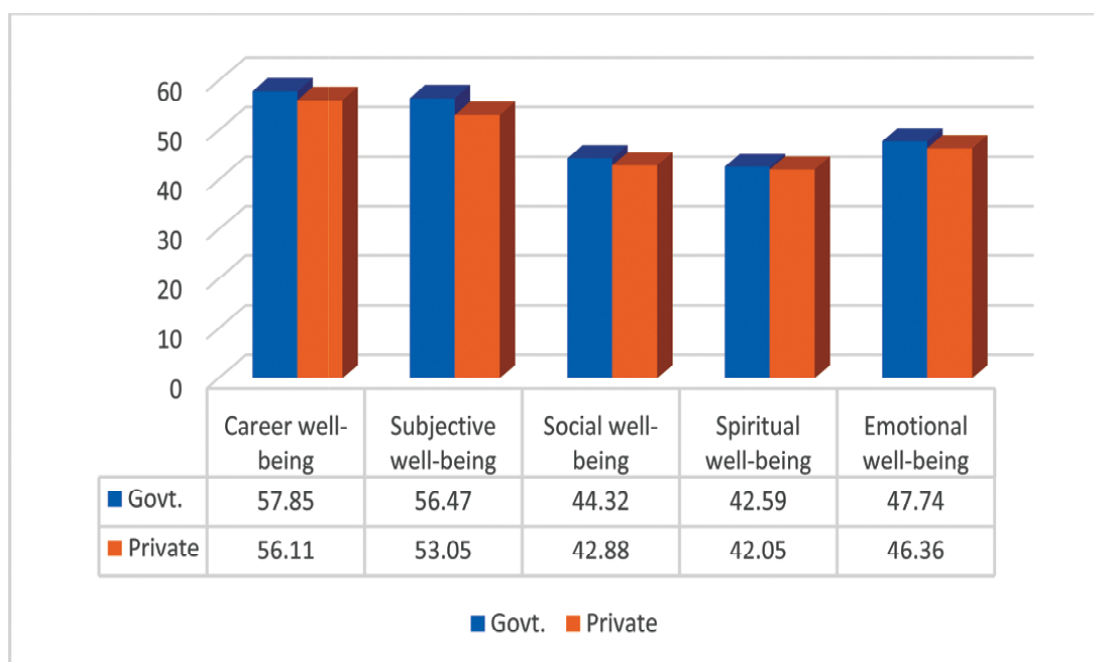


Fig 3: Graphical representation of mean score of boy and girl senior secondary school students in five dimensions of happiness

Table 5: N, Means, SDs and 't' Value of Govt. and Private Senior Secondary School Students on Happiness (N=620)

Variable		N	M	SD	df	t	Level of Significance
Stream	Arts	475	246.24	26.99	618	.690	NS
	Science	145	244.52	24.23			

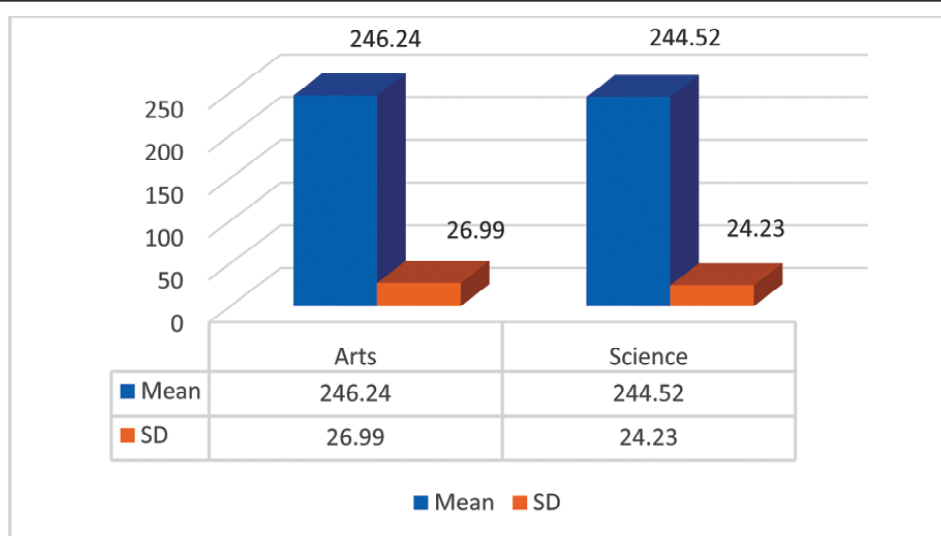


Fig 4: Graphical presentation of Mean score of Govt. and Private students on Happiness

Table Means, and ‘t’ of govt. private	Sl. No.	Dimensions	Type of Institution	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance	6: SDs values and senior
	1	Career Well-being	Govt.	392	57.85	5.79	3.51	0.01	
			Private	228	56.11	6.25			
	2	Subjective Well-being	Govt.	392	56.47	7.02	5.28	0.01	
			Private	228	53.05	8.89			
	3	Social Well-being	Govt.	392	44.32	5.51	2.86	0.01	
			Private	228	42.88	6.90			
	4	Spiritual Well-being	Govt.	392	42.59	5.64	1.14	NS	
			Private	228	42.05	6.03			
	5	Emotional Well-being	Govt.	392	47.74	6.20	2.67	0.01	
			Private	228	46.36	6.23			

Table 6: Means, SDs and 't' values of govt. and private senior secondary school students on each dimension of happiness

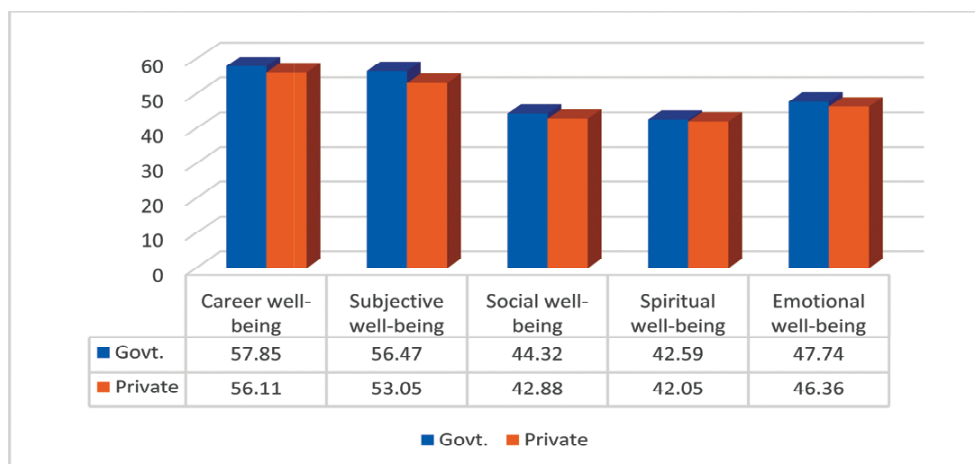


Fig 5: Graphical representation of mean score of govt. and private senior secondary school students in five dimensions of happiness

Table 7: N, Means, SDs and 't' Value of Arts and Science Stream Senior Secondary School Students on

Happiness (N=620)

Variable		N	M	SD	df	t	Level of Significance
Stream	Arts	475	246.24	26.99	618	.690	NS
	Science	145	244.52	24.23			

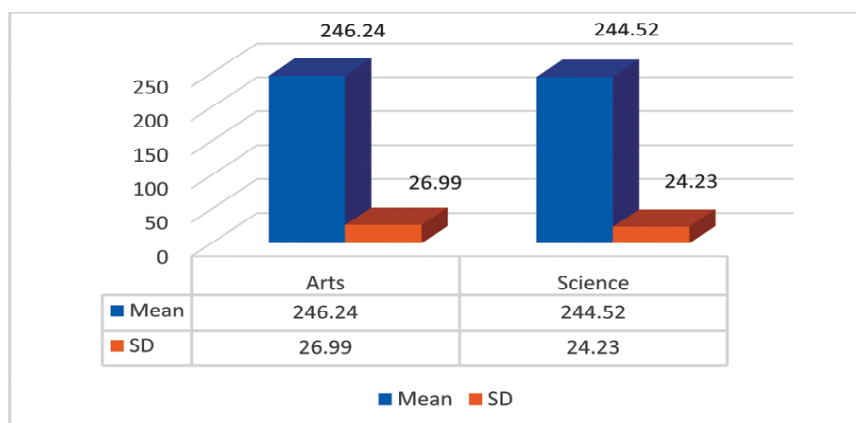


Fig 6: Graphical presentation of Mean score of Arts and Science stream students on Happiness

Table 8: Means, SDs and 't' values of arts and sciencesenior secondary schoolstudents on each dimension of happiness N=620

Sl. No.	Dimensions	Stream	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
1	Career Well-being	Arts	475	57.41	5.88	1.493	NS
		Science	145	56.56	6.43		
2	Subjective Well-being	Arts	475	55.38	8.09	.934	NS
		Science	145	54.68	7.36		
3	Social Well-being	Arts	475	43.81	6.18	.130	NS
		Science	145	43.73	5.83		
4	Spiritual Well-being	Arts	475	42.42	5.85	.172	NS
		Science	145	42.32	5.60		
5	Emotional Well-being	Arts	475	47.23	6.28	.003	NS
		Science	145	47.23	6.16		

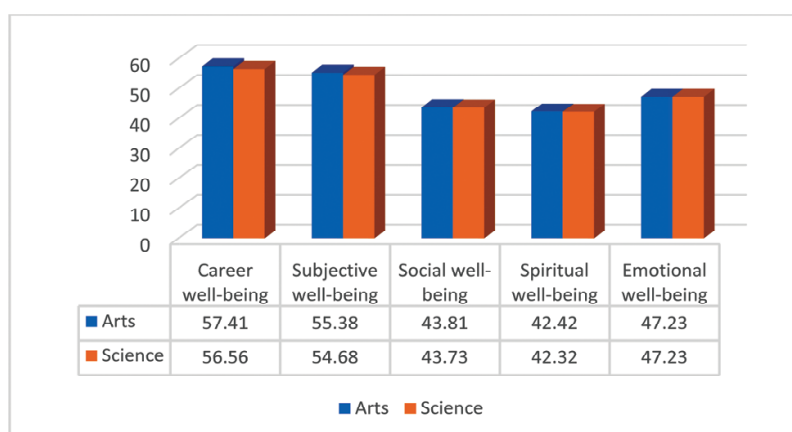


Fig 7: Graphical representation of mean score of arts and science senior secondary school students in five dimensions of happiness

Goal Orientation of Senior Secondary School Students

Table 9: Level of Goal Orientation of Senior Secondary School Students

Goal Orientation	Level	Range	No. of Students	Percentage
	Extremely High	207& above	11	2.1%
	High	179-206	170	27.4%
	Average	160-178	271	42.1%
	Low	130-159	147	25.1%
	Extremely Low	86-129	21	3.1%
Total			620	100%

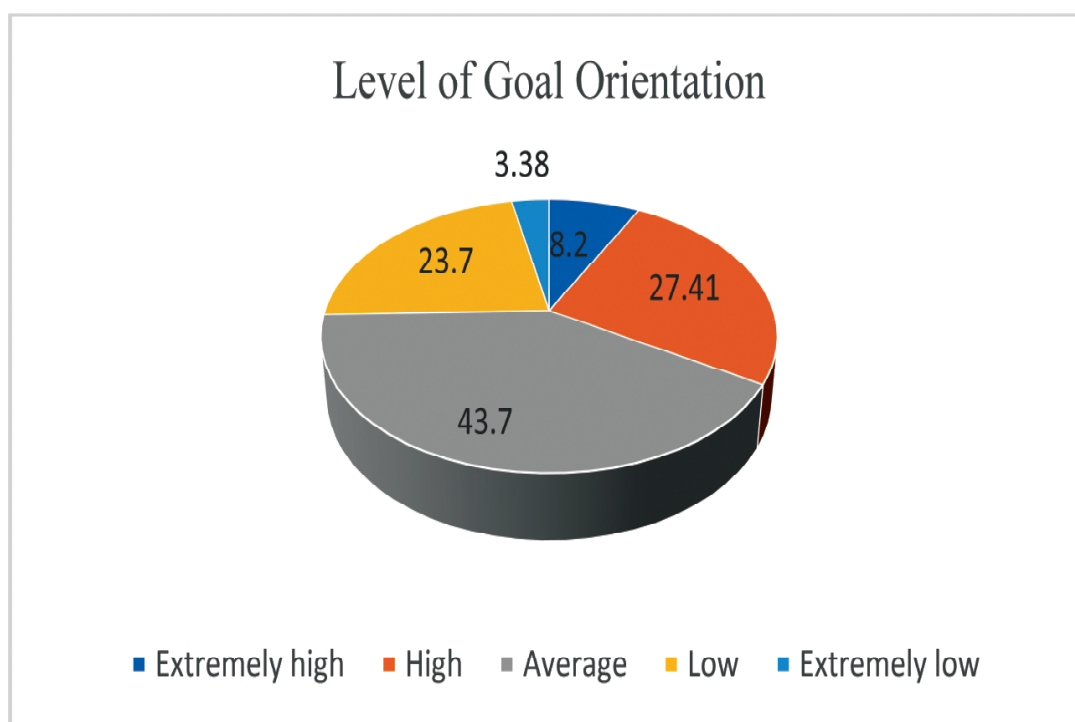


Fig 8: Pie diagram showing the percentage of respondents falling under each level of Goal Orientation

Table 10: Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis for the Goal Orientation of the Senior Secondary School Students (N=620)

Variable	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Goal Orientation	168.967	169.000	18.916	-.478	1.100

Table 11: N, Means, SDs and 't' Values of Boys and Girls Senior Secondary School Students on Goal Orientation

Variable		N	M	SD	df	t	Level of Significance
Gender	Boys	280	166.49	20.39	618	2.98	0.01
	Girls	340	171.01	17.37			

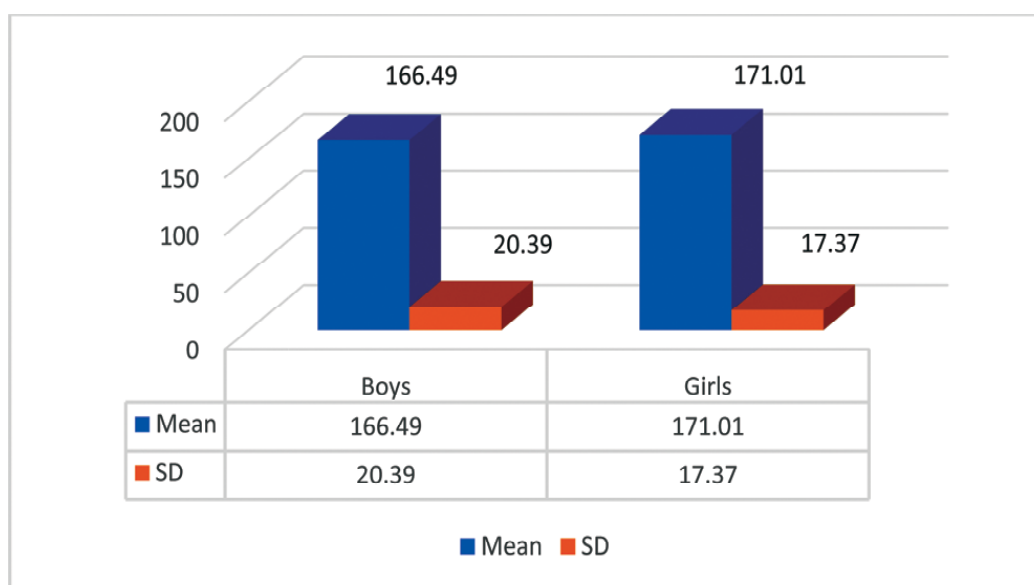


Fig 9: Graphical presentation of Mean score of Boys and Girl students on Goal Orientation

Table 12: Means, SDs and 't' values of boy and girls senior secondary school students on each dimension of goal orientation

Sl. No.	Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
1	Focus on Learning	Boy	280	19.72	3.52	3.26	0.01
		Girl	340	20.53	2.67		
2	Mastery of Task	Boy	280	19.84	3.38	2.77	0.01
		Girl	340	20.50	2.56		
3	Developing Skill	Boy	280	16.01	2.54	2.93	0.01
		Girl	340	16.56	2.09		
4	Improving Competency	Boy	280	16.29	2.21	1.85	NS
		Girl	340	16.61	2.14		
5	Task Accomplishment	Boy	280	21.36	2.59	.283	NS
		Girl	340	21.30	2.47		
6	Gaining Insight	Boy	280	20.39	2.89	2.59	0.01
		Girl	340	20.96	2.57		
7	Relative Ability	Boy	280	15.21	2.93	4.57	0.01
		Girl	340	16.25	2.70		
8	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	Boy	280	21.18	4.42	2.33	0.05
		Girl	340	21.98	4.06		
9	Work Avoidance	Boy	280	16.49	3.62	.539	NS
		Girl	340	16.33	3.69		

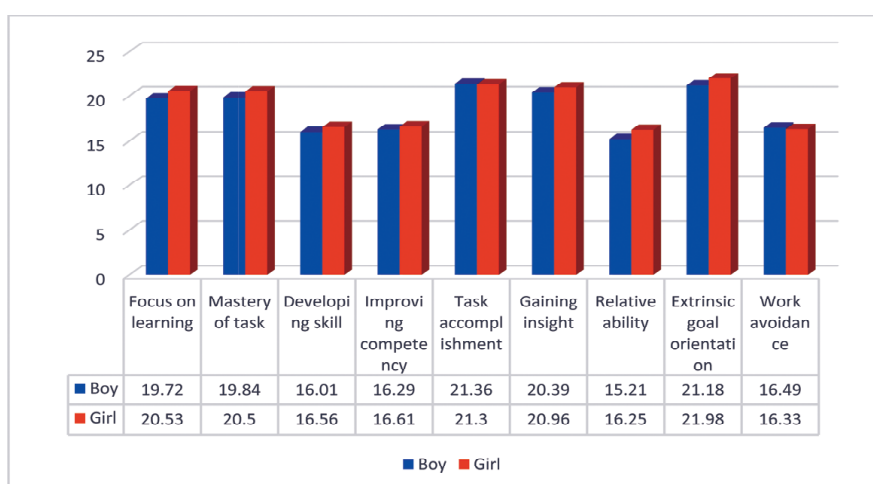


Fig 10: Graphical representation of mean score of boy and girls senior secondary school students in five dimensions of goal orientation

Table 13: N, Means, SDs and 't' Values of Govt. and Private Senior Secondary School Students on Goal Orientation

Variable		N	M	SD	df	t	Level of Significance
Institute	Govt.	392	172.74	17.74	618	6.75	0.01
	Private	228	162.48	19.15			

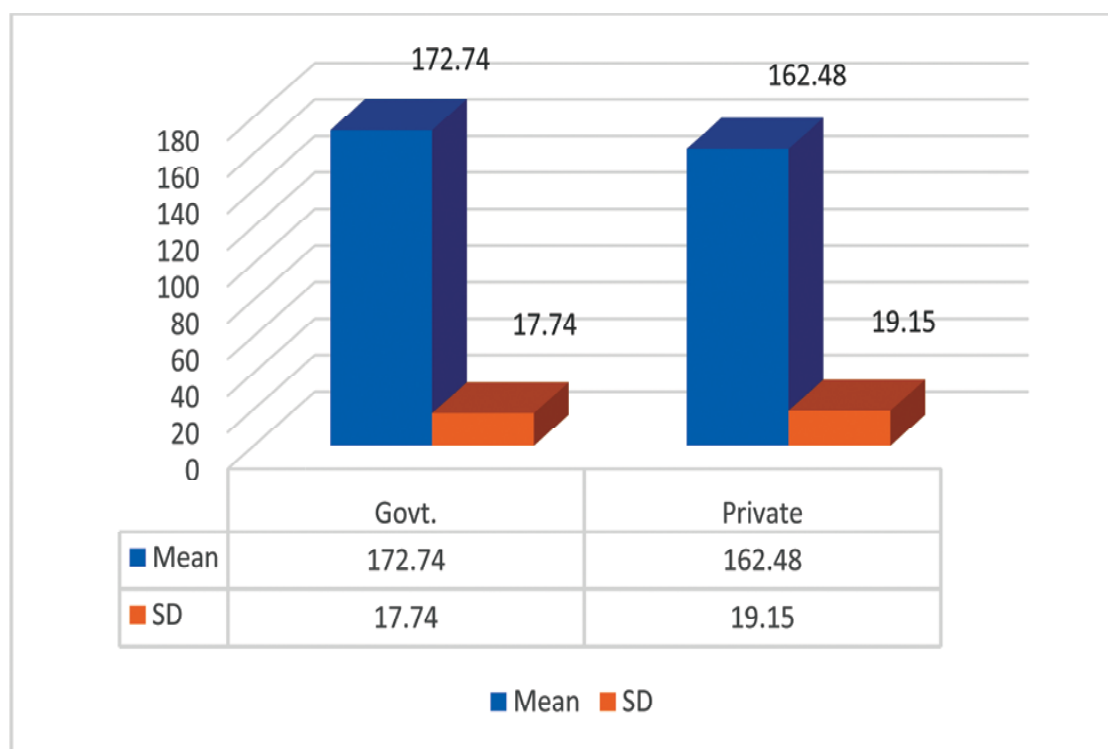


Fig 11: Graphical presentation of Mean score of Govt. and Private students on Goal Orientation

Table 14 : Means, SDs and 't' values of govt. and private senior secondary school students on each dimension of goal orientation

Sl. No.	Dimensions	Type of Institution	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
1	Focus on Learning	Govt.	392	20.63	2.70	4.99	0.01
		Private	228	19.36	3.58		
2	Mastery of Task	Govt.	392	20.77	2.56	6.36	0.01
		Private	228	19.24	3.35		
3	Developing Skill	Govt.	392	16.53	2.17	3.17	0.01
		Private	228	15.93	2.51		
4	Improving Competency	Govt.	392	16.63	2.12	2.48	0.05
		Private	228	16.18	2.26		
5	Task Accomplishment	Govt.	392	21.36	2.45	.363	NS
		Private	228	21.28	2.66		
6	Gaining Insight	Govt.	392	20.96	2.64	3.17	0.01
		Private	228	20.25	2.84		
7	Relative Ability	Govt.	392	16.29	2.41	6.01	0.01
		Private	228	14.89	3.32		
8	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	Govt.	392	22.46	4.08	6.68	0.01
		Private	228	20.18	4.13		
9	Work Avoidance	Govt.	392	17.11	3.64	6.61	0.01
		Private	228	15.17	3.36		

Table 15: N, Means, SDs and 't' Values of Arts and Science Stream Senior Secondary School Students on Goal Orientation

Variable		N	M	SD	df	t	Level of Significance
Stream	Arts	475	170.24	19.09	618	3.041	0.01
	Science	145	164.81	17.76			

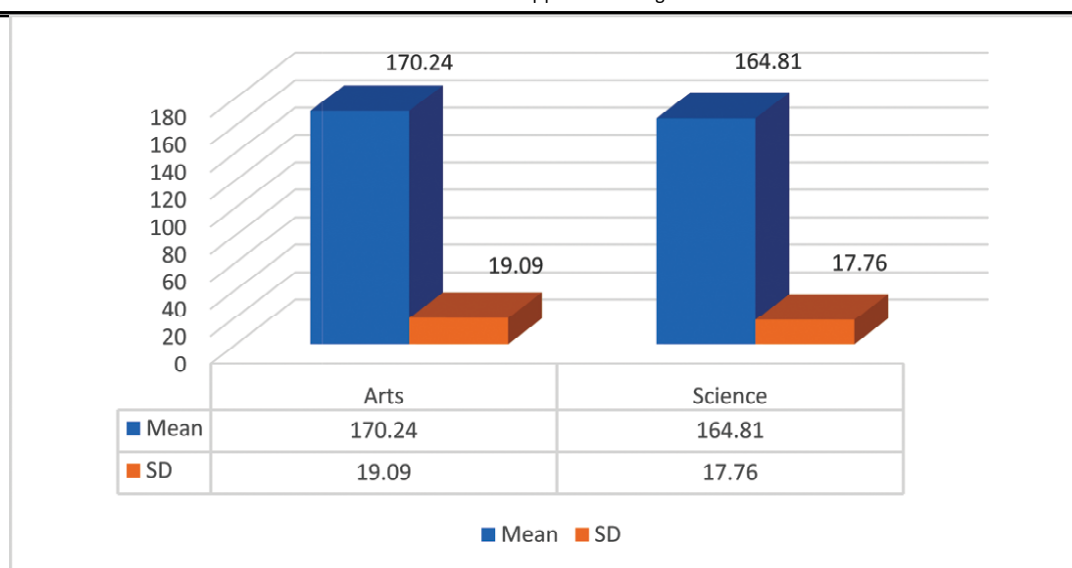


Fig 13: Graphical presentation of Mean score of Arts and Science students on Goal Orientation

Table 16: Means, SDs and 't' values of arts and sciencesenior secondary school students on each dimension of goal orientation

Sl. No.	Dimensions	Stream	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
1	Focus on Learning	Arts	475	20.37	3.12	2.97	0.01
		Science	145	19.49	3.01		
2	Mastery of Task	Arts	475	20.44	2.90	3.64	0.01
		Science	145	19.42	3.05		
3	Developing Skill	Arts	475	16.40	2.28	1.88	NS
		Science	145	15.99	2.43		
4	Improving Competency	Arts	475	16.54	2.16	1.47	NS
		Science	145	16.23	2.22		
5	Task Accomplishment	Arts	475	21.29	2.56	.724	NS
		Science	145	21.47	2.43		
6	Gaining Insight	Arts	475	20.78	2.78	1.22	NS
		Science	145	20.46	2.60		
7	Relative ability	Arts	475	15.87	2.89	1.36	NS
		Science	145	15.49	2.74		
8	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	Arts	475	21.80	4.29	1.94	NS
		Science	145	21.02	4.05		

9	Work Avoidance	Arts	475	16.76	3.60	4.47	0.01
		Science	145	15.23	3.59		

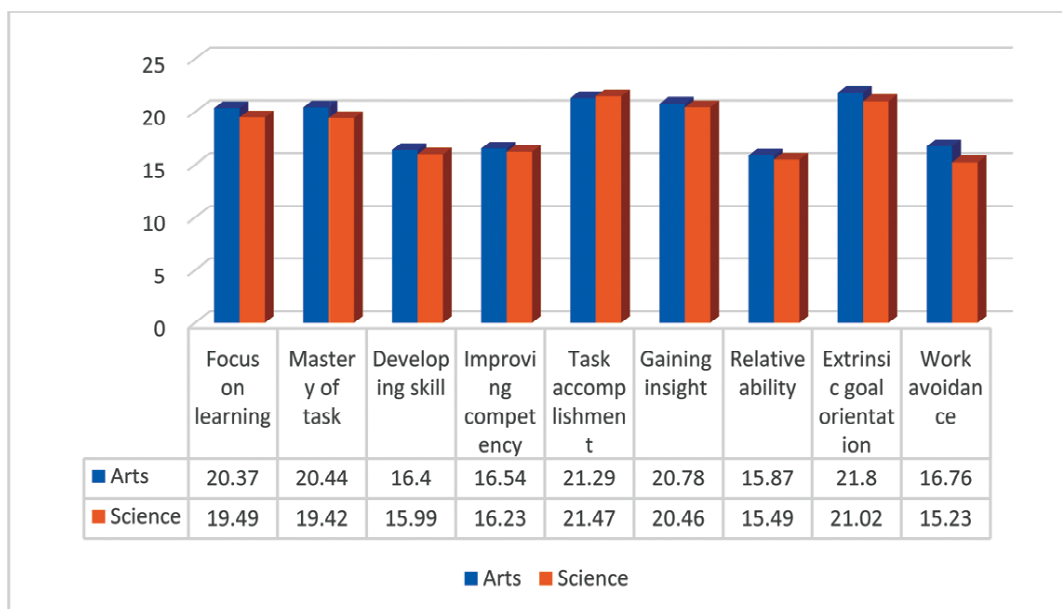


Fig 14: Graphical representation of mean score of arts and sciencesenior secondary school students in five dimensions of goal orientation

Relationship between Happiness and Goal orientation

Table 17: Coefficient of Correlation Between Happiness and Goal Orientation

Variable	N	df	Pearson 'r' value	Sign	Level of significance
Happiness	620	618	.699	'+'	0.01
Goal Orientation	620				

Goal Orientation as Predictors of Overall Happiness

Table 18: Linear Regression Summary: Goal Orientation Predicting Happiness

Variables	R Value	R ² Value	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error	F-Statistic	Significance (p-value)
Independent Goal Orientation	0.702	0.492	0.491	18.82	299.085	0.000 (Highly significant)
Dependent Happiness						

Coefficients: Impact of Goal Orientation

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Beta	t-value	p-value	VIF	Tolerance
Goal Orientation	1.028	0.737	21.802	0.000	1.389	0.720

Discussion

Table no.1 and figure no.1 shows among 620 higher secondary school students, the majority (43.87%) exhibit an average level of happiness, followed by 27.09% with high happiness, 23.87% with low happiness, 3.38% with extremely low happiness, and only 1.77% with extremely high happiness. This result contradicts with Kumar and Sahoo (2014), as in their study majority of the students fall under greater level of happiness which is more than average level of happiness.

Table 2 represent the mean, median and standard deviation for Happiness of senior secondary school students were found to be 245.84, 247.00 and 26.37 respectively. Also, skewness and kurtosis are found to be -.385 and .388 respectively. A perusal of the table indicates that the distribution of the Happiness score is slightly negatively skewed, which may be negligible and that could have occurred due to sampling fluctuation or chance factor.

Table 3 and figure 2 shows a significant difference in happiness between boys (M = 243.1, SD = 28.35) and girls (M = 248.09, SD = 24.44), with a t-value of 2.357 (df = 618, p < .05). The result is in agreement with Kumar and Sahoo (2024) in

their study also it was found that there is significant difference at 0.01 level in the means of male and female senior secondary school students on their happiness. The result of present study is in agreement with the study of Hasnain, Wazid and Hasan (2014) which revealed that females scored higher in overall well-being while males scored higher in happiness. The result of the study done by Vyas and Prajapati (2020) revealed significant differences in happiness levels based on gender which agree the result of the present study. The study done by Vyas and Prajapati found boys reporting higher happiness than girls and it contradicts with the result of the present study.

Table 4 and figure3, revealed that there were no significant gender differences in Career, Subjective, Spiritual, and Emotional Well-being among higher secondary school students, as boys and girls scored similarly across these dimensions. However, a notable exception was found in Social Well-being, where girls scored significantly higher than boys, indicating stronger social connections or support systems. This suggests that while overall happiness levels are comparable between genders in most areas, girls may experience greater social integration and interpersonal satisfaction, possibly due to cultural, developmental, or communicative factors that enhance their social experiences during adolescence.

Table 5 and figure 4 reveals that government school students ($M = 248.98$, $SD = 25.26$) reported significantly higher happiness than private school students ($M = 240.45$, $SD = 27.40$), with a t -value of 3.93 ($df = 618$, $p < .01$). The result of the study contradicts with the result of the study of Kumar and Sahoo (2024), which shows no difference in the happiness between government and private senior secondary school students.

Table 6 and figure 5 show that the study comparing happiness dimensions between government and private senior secondary school students found significant differences in Career, Subjective, Social, and Emotional Well-being, with government students consistently scoring higher. However, no significant difference was observed in Spiritual Well-being, indicating the acceptance of the null hypothesis for that dimension. Overall, the findings suggest that government school students experience greater well-being across most domains compared to their private school counterparts.

Table 7 and figure 6 shows that arts stream students ($M = 246.24$, $SD = 26.99$) and Science stream students ($M = 244.52$, $SD = 24.23$) showed no significant difference in happiness ($t = 0.690$, $df = 618$, $p > .05$), leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Table 8 and figure 7 depict that the study comparing happiness across arts and science senior secondary school students found no significant differences in any of the five dimensions- Career, Subjective, Social, Spiritual, and Emotional Well-being. The mean scores were closely aligned, with Career Well-being at 57.41 for arts and 56.56 for science students, Subjective Well-being at 55.38 and 54.68 respectively, and identical scores of 47.23 in Emotional Well-being. These results suggest that stream of study does not influence the happiness level of the students, indicating that both arts and science students experience similar emotional, social, and psychological well-being during this critical phase of adolescence. This insight can help educators and policymakers focus on universal strategies to support student happiness, regardless of academic stream.

Table 9 and figure 8 shows the level of goal orientation among higher secondary school students. Among 620 higher secondary students, the majority (43.70%) exhibit an average level of goal orientation, followed by 27.41% with high, 23.70% with low, 3.38% with extremely low, and 1.77% with extremely high goal orientation. This result is in agreement with the results of Dixit (2012); Sophia and Sreelatha (2014) and Sreekala (2019), which indicated that majority of high.

Table 10 reveals the level of goal orientation computed with Mean, Median and SD. Among 620 higher secondary students, the majority (43.70%) exhibit an average level of goal orientation, followed by 27.41% with high, 23.70% with low, 3.38% with extremely low, and 1.77% with extremely high goal orientation.

From table 11 and figure 9 it has been found that the mean and standard deviation of boy students are 166.49 and 20.39 respectively and the mean and standard deviation of girl students are 171.01 and 17.37 respectively. The t-value with df 618 is found to be 2.98 which is greater than critical value at 0.01 level. It shows that there is significant difference between boys and girl students in terms of goal orientation.

Table 12 and figure 10 depict that goal orientation among boy and girl senior secondary school students across nine dimensions. It found significant differences in six areas such as, girls scored higher than boys in Focus on Learning (20.53 vs. 19.72), Mastery of Task (20.50 vs. 19.84), Developing Skill (16.56 vs. 16.01), Gaining Insight (20.96 vs. 20.39), Relative Ability (16.25 vs. 15.21), and Extrinsic Goal Orientation (21.98 vs. 21.18). These differences were statistically significant, meaning girls showed stronger goal-oriented behaviours in these areas. However, in Improving Competency (16.61 vs. 16.29), Task Accomplishment (21.30 vs. 21.36), and Work Avoidance (16.33 vs. 16.49), the differences were not significant, suggesting boys and girls performed similarly in these dimensions. Overall, the results show that girls

tend to be more focused and motivated in several aspects of goal orientation, while both genders are equally competent in completing tasks and avoiding work. This insight can help teachers and counsellors tailor support strategies to encourage balanced goal-setting habits among all students.

The table 13 and figure 11 it has been found that the mean and standard deviation of goal orientation of govt. senior secondary school students are 172.74 and 17.74 respectively and the mean and standard deviation of private students are 162.48 and 19.15 respectively. The t-value is found to be 6.75 with df 618, which is greater than critical value at 0.01 level. It shows that there is significant difference between govt. and private students in terms of goal orientation.

The above table 14 and figure 12 reveal goal orientation between government and private senior secondary school students found significant differences in eight out of nine dimensions, with government students consistently scoring higher. These included areas such as Focus on Learning, Mastery of Task, Developing Skill, and Extrinsic Goal Orientation, indicating stronger motivation, academic engagement, and confidence among government school students. Only Task Accomplishment showed no significant difference, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis for the eight dimensions and acceptance for one. The results suggest that government school environments may better foster goal-directed behaviours, and highlight the need for targeted strategies in private schools to enhance the academic motivation and performance of the students.

From the above table 15 and figure 13 it has been found that the mean and standard deviation of arts stream senior secondary school students are 170.24 and 19.09 respectively and the mean and standard deviation of science stream students are 164.81 and 17.76 respectively. The t-value is found to be 3.041 with df 618, which is significant at 0.01 level. It shows that there is significant difference between arts and science stream students in terms of goal orientation. Hence, null hypothesis has been rejected.

Table 16 and figure 14 show goal orientation across 9 dimensions between arts and science senior secondary students, revealing significant differences in 3 areas: arts students scored higher in Focus on Learning ($M = 20.37$, $SD = 3.12$) than science students ($M = 19.49$, $SD = 3.01$), $t = 2.97$; in Mastery of Task ($M = 20.44$, $SD = 2.90$ vs. $M = 19.42$, $SD = 3.05$), $t = 3.64$; and in Work Avoidance ($M = 16.76$, $SD = 3.60$ vs. $M = 15.23$, $SD = 3.59$), $t = 4.47$ - all statistically significant at the 0.01 level. These findings suggest arts students are more mastery-driven and focused but also more prone to avoiding effortful tasks. No significant differences were found in the remaining 6 dimensions-Developing Skill, Improving Competency, Task

Accomplishment, Gaining Insight, Relative Ability, and Extrinsic Goal Orientation- with t-values ranging from 0.724 to 1.94, indicating similar motivational traits.

The table 17 found a computed correlation coefficient of 0.699 between happiness and goal orientation among senior secondary school students, which is significantly higher than the table value of 0.098 at the 0.01 level with 618 degrees of freedom. This indicates a significant positive relationship, meaning that as students goal orientation increases, their happiness tends to increase as well.

From the table 18, it is observed that Goal orientation significantly predicts happiness, with each unit increase in goal orientation leading to a 1.028 unit rise in happiness. Its high standardized beta value (0.737) highlights its dominant influence on student happiness, and the absence of multicollinearity ($VIF < 2$) confirms its reliable contribution to the regression model.

The study is in agreement with the study of Kumar and Sahoo (2024) that majority of the students observe average level of happiness.

Implications, Suggestions and Conclusion

The study highlights that a large proportion of senior secondary students experience only moderate levels of happiness (43.87%) and goal orientation (42.1%), suggesting a critical need to strengthen goal-directed behavior in educational settings. Notably, students with higher goal orientation-those who set clear academic targets, persist through challenges, and strive for mastery-tend to report greater happiness. This connection underscores that goal orientation is not just about academic success, it is a key driver of emotional well-being. When students feel purposeful and capable of achieving their goals, they experience a sense of fulfillment, confidence, and resilience, all of which contribute to overall happiness.

Moreover, the study found that girls, government school students, and arts stream students generally scored higher in both happiness and goal orientation, indicating that supportive environments and self-driven learning may play a role. Since goal orientation emerged as a strong and reliable predictor of happiness, schools should actively cultivate it through personalized learning plans, mentorship, and activities that encourage self-reflection and perseverance. By helping students develop a clear sense of direction and intrinsic motivation, educators can foster not only academic achievement but also emotional stability and life satisfaction. In short, nurturing goal orientation is a powerful lever for enhancing student happiness and shaping well-rounded, resilient individuals.

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