A Representation of Hope and Happiness on Iranian Television (Case Report: Dorehami Program)

Homa Sedghi-Jalal[1] (PhD), Seyed-Vahid Aqili[1] (PhD), Hassan Khojasteh-Bagherzadeh[2] (PhD), Davood Nemati-Anaraki[3] (PhD)

1. Department of Social Communication Sciences, Faculty of Communication Sciences and Media Studies, Islamic Azad University, Tehran Central Branch, Tehran, Iran
2. Department of Radio Production, Faculty of Communication & Media, IRIB University, Tehran, Iran
3. Department of Communication, Faculty of Communication & Media, IRIB University, Tehran, Iran

Corresponding Author:
Seyed-Vahid Aqili,
Department of Social Communication Sciences,
Faculty of Communication Sciences and Media Studies,
Islamic Azad University,
Tehran Central Branch,
Tehran,
Iran
E-mail: seyed_vahid_aqili@yahoo.com

Abstract

Introduction: Hope and happiness has had a declining trend in Iran's society, which are the most influential social indicators of mental health. Therefore, with regards to the important function of television in entertainment, this article investigates the Dorehami TV series with the aim of representing hope and happiness in the national media.
Method: The sample of this multi-method qualitative was selected from the programs of Nasim of (IRIB), four episodes of Dorehami TV series was investigated. Given the discourse nature of the research, semiotics analysis was used to represent hope and happiness in the media to discover hidden meanings and themes, and the critical discourse was used to find the underlying layers of the text.
Results: The results showed that the concepts of hope and happiness were represented in this program with themes of social criticism through psychological components in three domains including:, factors (psychological): (laughter, humor, kindness, ability to pursue daily activities, adaptation to life's challenges, meaningful efforts in life, self-esteem, solution-oriented thinking), and social factors (social security and justice, achieving worldly interests).
Conclusion: Criticizing social and cultural issues in a humorous manner creates happy moments for the spectators, helps develop socially desirable cultures and behaviors which bring upon happiness and hopefulness in the society.

Keywords: Representation, Media, Hope, Happiness

Introduction

As two of the most important indicators of community development, hope and happiness as well as mental health [1] play an important role in ensuring individual and social health. All sections of community have physical, psychological and social dimensions in the light of sustainable health [2]. Mental health, as an important section of the overall concept of health [3], includes an inner feeling of being good, and self-actualization of potential intellectual and emotional abilities [4], which creates the ability to communicate with others, adapt to change and cope with problems in individuals [5].

The feeling of happiness is an important feature of mental health [6]. Happiness promotes creativity, helps people achieve their goals more easily, improves decision-making abilities, soothes negative emotions, and enhances life satisfaction and quality of life, and by improving physical and mental health, enables people to enjoy their lives [7]. Being happy

can solve many psychosocial problems and increases motivation at work and education [8]. Empirical researches also confirm the fact that happiness has positive outcomes such as, mental health and physical health [9].

The constituent categories of happiness may be factors such as: the presence of many positive emotions (pleasant moods and emotions) and a relative lack of negative emotions (unpleasant moods and emotions). Positive emotions can be divided into concepts such as happiness, satisfaction, pride, affection and passion [10], optimism, self-esteem and a feeling of self-actualization [11]. In Seligman's theory of happiness and fortune, three sources of life's enjoyments, life's attachments, and useful and purposeful works for happiness are raised [12]. Also, for Winhoven, happiness is a degree of quality of life that one generally evaluates as positive and desirable [5].

Additionally, it is essential to note that for being happy, the component of life expectancy must be addressed [13]. One of the important factors in mental health is life with hope. Hope acts as a stimulating factor and causes human vitality. A hopeful man knows how to overcome the problems of life. Hope helps people be flexible and relax and enables them to be free from the traumas they have experienced in their lives, resulting in greater life satisfaction [14]. Hope is the tendency associated with expecting a positive outcome [15] and a process that allows individuals to design and pursue goals [16]. In Snyder's [13] perspective, hope is the perceived ability to generate paths towards desired goals and the perceived motivation to move along these paths [17]. It is characterized by seven components that include coping, acting, happiness, performance, communication, manners and collectivism [18].

Researches' results also show that people who are more hopeful have higher self-esteem and are more likely to engage in activities that lead to greater health. They also believe that they can cope with the challenges they may face in life [19]. In addition, having meaning in life interacting with hope, can increase happiness, life satisfaction, positive emotions, and decrease depression [20, 21].

Researches show that in the study of happiness trends over the two periods of 2005-2007 and 2013-2015, Iran's happiness score dropped with a 5.7 percent [22]. According to the results of the UN World Happiness Report (2016), Iran's happiness score stands at 105th ranking with 4.8. Accordingly, among countries with four categories of happiness (high, above the mean, below the mean, and low), the Iranian society falls into the category of countries below the mean [23]. Economic and social problems and pressures that impose stressful conditions on the Iranian society, increase the importance of attention to the issue of happiness [24].

In this process, as a major source of health information, the mass media is considered as an important source of health promotion because of its widespread presence in people's lives and awareness [25]. Attempts to maintain and promote social health have always been one of the expectations for the media [26]. For the planned application of the media in behavior change, mass media devices and the effects of media on health-related behaviors are being studied [27, 28].

Entertainment is one of the important functions of media. A method used by the media for this purpose is the way of representation [29]. In the meantime, television plays a major role in shaping the spectator's perception of the world as well as in transferring promising and encouraging concepts and themes [30].

As mentioned, due to the importance of the two factors influencing mental health, that is, hope and happiness and considering media function as an effective tool in representation and illustration in the creation or modification of public opinion, and in particular, in hopeful and happiness behaviors that are of extra importance, this study deals with the representation of happiness and hope discourse in one of the Islamic Republic of Iran's TV programs (Dorehami) with the aim of knowing the concepts, themes and examples suggested from hope and happiness in the national media.

Method

The present study is a qualitative multi-method research. According to Lindlof [31], qualitative research involve a set of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate, and understand the meanings of social phenomena. For this purpose, in order to achieve the research objectives, the theoretical foundations of the research were studied and the factors and components of hope and happiness were extracted based on research findings in internal and external studies. Then, considering the discourse nature of the subject under study, which sought to identify how hope and happiness are represented in the national media, using semiotic analysis to reveal hidden meanings and themes, through the analysis of the critical discourse of Fairclough, the description, interpretation, and clarification of the propositions and finding the underlying layers of the text and identifying what was presented to the spectator beyond the propositions were dealt with. The study population was the television programs of Iran television. Purposeful sampling was used according to the qualitative method of the research. Therefore, among the broadcasting networks of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nasim was selected based on the goals and approaches of its formation, and among the programs of this network, Dorehami was considered based on research objectives. Dorehami is the name of a TV program directed and presented by Mehran Modiri. In each episode of the program, Mehran Modiri performs a stand-up comedy about a specific subject (social, cultural, political, and economic). For this purpose, four episodes of the Dorehami TV program were chosen during 2017 over a period of one week, and were evaluated. In choosing this time frame it was taken into consideration that special occasions such as mourning/celebration (according to the official national calendar) do not subject the research results to environmental conditions and do not result in bias. The validity of the components was confirmed by

experts. The findings were collected through careful observation of the program and with the help of splitting images into different layers and components, such as scene, formation and color of characters, light and color, facade size, dialogues and music. Then, based on the obtained components, the hope and happiness of the theoretical foundations were matched. This continued until the researcher found it saturated to use the components of hope and happiness in the Dorehami program. Each part from which a component was extracted was individually recorded in a table and analyzed at the end of each selected views. After observation, phrases related to hope and happiness were extracted and then keywords were extracted through these phrases. Finally, the findings were analyzed based on the research questions.

Result

The concepts of hope and happiness in Dorehami can be traced through the following components. Laughter and smile and humor were components that were represented through the host and actors' dialogues and even conversations with the program's participants in the form of verbal humor and humorous situations in Dorehami.

"Host: What is the idiom "Mouse couldn't get into its hole (This is a Persian idiom which refers to someone who although is not able to do something, adds a bigger trouble to the self.)" in English? Female spectator: "Mouse don't go to her house." The host looks at her with amazement (surprised with her translation). The audience laugh."

"Host: "The pot calling the kettle black." Male spectator (embarrassed): Pot tells pot black (the host and the spectators laugh). In the end, the male spectator says: I just wanted to come (to get the prize)."

"The host asks the in-studio audience: "Who has a disc here?" A number of people raise their hands. The host laughs again and says with wonder: "Oh, how many discs we have here"; then asks: "Do you become like this? (Refers to his own situation) and then says sympathetically: "Pity!" and then asks: "Let's see the show?" He smiles a little, but suddenly himself bursts into laugher of the situation.

To show kindness and affection, he says, "There may not be an opportunity for collaborative relationship with someone who you're friends with due to some reasons, but this is just in the field of work and definitely if something happens to this person in the rest of the world I would go for help."

Aimed at showing the ability to follow daily activities and promote the value of work and effort: "I am very hard working in doing my job and achieving the role, and I am very serious in my career."

He shows the adaptation to life's challenges with a sentence like: "When I was depressed about doing something I read two thousand pages of books until I was good again."

The following conversation with the guest was for meaningful endeavors in life:

The host: Do you attribute your success to luck or your own toughness?

The guest: "Yes, luck has happened, but luck depends on everybody's abilities. I have no opportunity for deficiency, and I make the most of the opportunities. I see myself as monkey wrench; I did everything in cinema from assistant, actor, director, production manager, even service, logistics assistant etc.".

In this conversation with the guest, he also points out to the role of self-esteem and enhancing self-belief as well as solution-oriented thinking, by replacing different activities and people's efforts:

Guest (who was an actor): "Even if somehow I will not be able to continue my acting career now, I know suitable jobs for myself which I know I am good at, for example I'm good at cooking and I'm a good businessman."

In a talk with the program's guest, job dissatisfaction and social insecurity, and a sense of inequality and unfair (negative components of hope and happiness) point to a situation where favoritism replace criteria in social affairs.

Host: "Is there a mafia in the cinema?"

Guest: "Strongly, and in every period it exists in a specific form; relatives and friends are given more importance, meritocracy is low, as well as in the society."

In order to achieve the material and worldly interests (negative components of hope and happiness) the host talks about the awards of the program at various intervals during the run; the host explains: "By installing an applied application and using it, spectators can take part in the program draw that includes expensive foreign cars as well million-toman awards. And he emphasizes: "The more transactions you have through the installation of this software, the more likely you are to win."

In light of the above, the findings of this study on how to represent hope and happiness in Dorehami program, it could be displayed briefly in three structural, psychological, and social domains as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Domains and Components of Hope and Happiness in Dorehami Program

Domains	Components	Research Background
	Laughter, Humor	32, 8, 33
	Kindness	34, 8
Psychological	Ability to Follow Daily Activities	35
	Adaptation to life's challenges	19
	Meaningful Endeavors	34
	Self-esteem	36,37,19,38
	Solution-oriented thinking	13, 48
Social	Social Security	39,34,40,41,42
	Social Justice	1
	Achieving Material and Worldly Interests	43, 44

Discussion

The main elements of creating happiness and hope in the Dorehami program based on the findings of this study included; psychological factors (laughter, humor, kindness, ability to follow daily activities, adaptation to life's challenges, meaningful efforts in life, self-esteem, the ability to pursue routine activities and solution-oriented thinking), and social factors (security, justice, fairness, and obtaining material and worldly interests).

A) Psychological Factors:

Laughter and Humor: As findings show, the laughter component has been repeatedly performed by the presenter, actors, invited guests, and in-studio spectators. Laughter creates a kind of energy in individuals that manifests their inner states as a pleasant behavior on their faces and enhances their social relationships. Humor is also considered as a way to enhance the quality of interpersonal relationships [45], enhancing the feeling of closeness, togetherness and friendship [46], and is created when a person says or does something inconsistent, unexpected, or entertaining, or that happens to someone for other reasons and as a result, people start to laugh. The results of some studies [32] also show a positive relationship between humor and happiness, so that happy people laugh more and have better feelings towards humor. Choosing a host for Dorehami was one of the most important elements of creating humor. The humorous nature of the host as one of the components of happiness is effective in creating funny situations as a kind of humor. A situation that is common in ordinary situations, when, by the hosts' narration style, is performed in a funny and humorous way, reflects a situation which the spectator may find himself in, thereby drawing the spectator's attention to a social behavior. In fact, by designing this style of performance, Dorehami creators oriented the laughter of the spectator and did not suffice with artificial laughter. Also, the host's humor and performance style, which is improvisational and far from artificial, has created a close relationship with the audience, resulting in a positive communication, laughter, and the creation of happy moments.

Kindness: As research have shown [34], one of the factors affecting one's level of happiness is conscious behaviors such as kindness and loving others. This program has shown kindness for others by creating a museum (Dorehami Museum) and by using the proceeds of its sales in the interest of charity. In each section, the program guests donate something – which is of material or spiritual value – to the museum for sale. This action is effective in the promotion of the spirit of kindness and altruism at the social level and, as a result, spirit of hope is enhanced in the community for being supported by others. Also amiability and affection for family and spouses is also represented as an exciting positive factor through the conversation with the guests during the program.

Ability to Follow Daily Activities: Research have shown [43] that happy people directly try solving their problems and are capable of doing their daily activities. In fact, Dorehami has tried to reinforce social hopefulness through considering the value of individual work and effort and the creation of a dynamic and active spirit in the community, in which case everyone has a continuous, useful and positive effort to achieve a bright future.

Adaptation to Life's Challenges and Meaningful Endeavors: The consequence of representing this component of hope and happiness in Dorehami is to bring happiness and thus more life satisfaction and greater hope to individuals. As the results of previous research have shown [19], people with higher levels of hope are more capable of coping with life's challenges. Happy people continually strive to achieve their goals. Therefore, the representation of this component has worked to create an active and dynamic spirit in the community and to create social hope.

Self-esteem: One of the factors that greatly influence one's happiness is self-esteem. Research [44] also confirm the association between happiness and self-esteem. Representing this feature in Dorehami enhances people's self-confidence and individual abilities and thereby improves their performance in the community. Hope is also represented through the creation and strengthening of self-belief.

Solution-oriented Thinking: As addressed in Snyder's Hope Theory, pathway thinking as the component of hope means the perceived ability of the individual to identify and create ways to achieve a goal. Individuals with high levels of hopefulness with the goal of overcoming potential obstacles, consider several paths to reach the goal. Studies also show that problem-solving skill training plays an essential role in the mental health of individuals [47] and enhances the hope discourse in the society. In Dorehami, the component of solution-oriented thinking, is represented by replacing various activities in the event of disruption and stoppage on the path of movement and attempt.

B) Social Factors:

Security and Social Justice: As research have shown [40, 41], as the variables such as justice and equality, socio-economic well-being, security, and generally, equal and fair access to resources and opportunities in a society are more realized, happiness is higher among them, and the variables of deprivation, mistrust, and insecurity also inversely influenced social happiness and vitality. On the other hand, individual effort without a collective will to achieve hope and happiness is difficult or impossible. Dorehami refers to a situation in the society where favoritism is dominant on criteria, and for this reason, the sense of dissatisfaction with business, social insecurity, inequality and unfairness that arises from comparing one with the other in the society, will be from the negative components of hope and vitality that diminish individual and social happiness in society. What has emerged from the discussions in this program is that the well-being and happiness of every person will depend on justice and equality in the society, and that is also consistent with the theory of relative deprivation that recognizes lack of happiness at the individual and social level, as a result of lack of feeling of justice and fairness as a result of comparing one to the other people in society.

Achieving Material and Worldly Interests (positive factor of hope and happiness); The results of the present study showed that although meaningful effort in life is represented through the conversations with guests and participants in the program, this program encourages the audience to participate in the drawing through the promise of giving high-value awards that the participant winning chance depends on more use of the promoted products in the program. Although in the distant past, people's perceptions of happiness were synonymous with the concept of luck, but this belief has changed today and has given its place to responsibility, reasoning, and personal planning and thinking [43]. In fact, the concept of hope, is a mental state and positive belief about one's abilities, and existing facilities and conditions to attain a goal or goals in life, and is associated with realistic and drives one towards productive and positive activities that are fundamentally different from unrealistic aspirations. So if for any reason a person reaches such a situation that he/she cannot imagine facilities to fulfill his/her wishes or change conditions, it is natural not to find the motivation to move and work and cannot be expected to be dynamic. Therefore, the media, while promoting a culture that regards happiness and vitality as synonymous with luck, deprives the spectator of the opportunity to work consciously as a component of hope and happiness, and given the fact that the chance of people winning such drawings is too little, in the long run, the hopelessness of achieving material benefits will spread to society, making it a hopeless, static, sedentary, and motionless society. In fact, television, in a program designed for entertainment and happiness, invites spectators to participate in various drawings, promoting and representing a culture of happiness based on material issues and luck. Whereas the national media, by enhancing the value of work and effort in society, can play an effective role in promoting the level of hope and social happiness in society.

Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to identify the concepts, themes and examples presented in the hope and happiness discourse in the national media. To this end, the Dorehami program was examined as a series aimed at creating happiness and hope from IRIB Nasim. This goal has been put forward within the framework of the representational theory, whereby the national media constructs concepts of hope and happiness, and shapes the ways that the spectator thinks about these concepts and acts consciously to reinforce the dominant discourse of society.

The findings of the study showed that the themes of hope and happiness in the Dorehami program represented through social criticism, and the critique of political, economic, and social issues in humorous language provided an opportunity for television to critique inappropriate social behaviors and traditions of the audience with the help of humor and laughter. The narrative of humorous situations from the ordinary moments of the spectator's life serves as a mirror in which the viewer observes his or her situation and society. From this perspective, in the most superficial layer of discourse

of hope and happiness, happy and entertaining moments are created, but the deepest cognitive layers are targeted through the attention of the spectator to the socio-cultural abusive behaviors. Thus, the unfavorable socio-cultural conditions that have been criticized in this program explain part of the reason for the decline in the level of happiness in the society. The national media's reporting of unpopular social behavior without feeling blamed by individuals and social institutions of the society will contribute to the development of socially desirable culture and behaviors and in turn, contribute to enhancing the hopeful and promising spirit in the society. In general, regarding the functions of the media, and as researches have shown, happiness and vitality can affect people's attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors, and cause social peace of mind and so it is suggested that national media give more importance to social happiness and vitality in order to reduce concerns, fear, anxiety etc. in the society.

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