
HAPPINESS AND PSYCHOLOGY**Dr. Meenakshi Sharma**

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ABSTRACT

Happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being characterized by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. Happiness as a concept seems to be readily embraced by the majority of people and appears to be more valued than the pursuit of money, moral goodness or going to heaven. Philosophers and religious thinkers often define happiness in terms of living a good life, or flourishing, rather than simply as an emotion. Happy people are healthy people. Happy people live longer and enjoy a greater quality of life. They function at a higher level, utilizing their personal strengths, skills, and abilities to contribute to their own wellbeing as well as that of others and society. Wellbeing is a contented state of being happy and healthy and prosperous. Psychological well-being refers to how people evaluate their lives. These evaluations may be in the form of cognitions or in the form of affect. The cognitive part is an information based appraisal of one's life that is when a person gives conscious evaluative judgments about one's satisfaction with life as a whole. People from around the world tend to have a similar concept of happiness and can recognize happiness in others. As a result, the specific emotion of happiness is often included as one of a small number of basic emotions that cannot be broken down into more fundamental emotions and that may combine to form other, more complex emotions (in fact, it is sometimes the only positive emotion that is considered to be basic). Thus, happiness is an important concept for researchers who study emotions. Most people evaluate their life as either good or bad, so they are normally able to offer judgments. People invariably experience moods and emotions which have a positive effect or a negative effect. We can define psychological well-being in terms of internal experience of the respondent and their own perception of their lives. People have a level of subjective well-being even if they do not often consciously think about it, and the psychological system offers virtually a constant evaluation of what is happening to the person.

Keywords: *happiness, psychology, types of psychology, happiness and positive psychology, and India in happiness index.*

INTRODUCTION:

Happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being characterized by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. Happiness as a concept seems to be readily embraced by the majority of people and appears to be more valued than the pursuit of money, moral goodness or going to heaven. Philosophers and religious thinkers often define happiness in terms of living a good life, or flourishing, rather than simply as an emotion. Happy people are healthy people. Happy people live longer and enjoy a greater quality of life. They function at a higher level, utilizing their personal strengths, skills, and abilities to contribute to their own wellbeing as well as that of others and society. People from around the world tend to have a similar concept of happiness and can recognize happiness in others. As a result, the specific emotion of happiness is often included as one of a small number of basic emotions that cannot be broken down into more fundamental emotions and that may combine to form other, more complex emotions (in fact, it is sometimes the only positive emotion that is considered to be basic). Thus, happiness is an important concept for researchers who study emotions.

Happiness:

An entire field of research has developed around the more inclusive concept of subjective well-being, which is characterized by a broad collection of happiness-related phenomena rather than a specific momentary emotion. As one might expect, people who are happy in this way tend to experience frequent positive emotions and infrequent negative emotions. This broader form of happiness is not purely emotional, however: it also has a cognitive component. When happy people are asked to think back on the conditions and events in their lives, they tend to evaluate these conditions and events positively. Thus, happy people report being satisfied with their lives and the various domains in their lives.

Interestingly, these different components of happiness do not always co-occur within the same person. It is possible that someone could experience a great deal of negative emotions yet still acknowledge that the conditions of his or her life are good ones. For example, someone who works with the poor, the sick, or the destitute may experience frequent negative emotions but may also feel satisfied with life because the work is worthwhile. Similarly, people who spend lots of time engaging in hedonistic pleasures may experience frequent momentary positive emotions, but they may also feel that life is empty and meaningless. Subjective well-being researchers are interested in the various factors that influence these distinct components.

Psychology:

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior. Psychologists are actively involved in studying and understanding mental processes, brain functions, and behavior. The field of psychology is considered a "Hub Science" with strong connections to the medical sciences, social sciences, and education (Boyack, Klavans, & Borner, 2005).

Types of psychology:

Behavioral Neuroscience/psychology deals with factors influencing plasticity of brain and behavior through development and into adulthood, stress and the brain, endocrine and immune regulation of brain and behavior and the neurobiology of cognitive control

Clinical Psychology deals with the treatment of mood and personality disorders using cognitive behavioral therapies, biobehavioral responses to cancer diagnosis and treatment, Testing and dissemination of psychological treatments for cancer patients, Psychological and behavioral adaptation to chronic health problems, Effects of exercise on psychological and cognitive functioning, Mindfulness and cognitive functioning in older adults

Cognitive Psychology is associated with, experimental, brain imaging, and model-based approaches to perception, memory, decision making, action, and language, modeling decision processing in memory, perception, numeracy, how our visual systems create our stable perception of the world, how we control our attention in complex tasks, how the auditory system solves the challenges of understanding spoken language.

Decision Science works as how cognitive, affective, and social processes influence judgment and choice, how numeracy (numeric ability) affects real-world decisions, how the brain represents subjective values and beliefs, how to improve self-control, how information is interpreted and integrated in decision making, modeling decision making in aging and cognitive decline

Developmental Psychology is associated with the learning and developmental change in cognition, behavior, and the brain, genetic and environmental influences on brain and behavior development of memory, categorization, and reasoning development of numerical cognition and mathematical thinking how children learn language and use it to understand their world how children grow beyond the superficial in their social and moral understanding how children grow beyond the superficial in their social and moral understanding.

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities describes how to improve health and well-being in children and adults with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other neurodevelopment disorders, how to best support family members of people with disabilities, how to impact the outcome and course of intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, and related neurodevelopment disorders, how to develop psychological instruments that measure core and associated features of intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, and other neurodevelopment disorders, how to treat behavior and emotional problems in children and adults who have intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, and related neurodevelopment disorders.

Quantitative Psychology is developing, evaluating and applying new quantitative methods for the analysis of psychological data, the application of statistical models to real world problems, and Bayesian models of human cognition.

Social Psychology deals with automatic and deliberative attitudes: influences on information processing, judgment, and behavior, increasing women's participation in STEM disciplines, how motivations in social interactions shape relationships, beliefs, well-being, and health, what motivates social behavior, effects of the immune system and common anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g. Tylenol) on emotions, decisions, and social behavior, and how similarity in brain activity across people underlies similarity in thoughts, attitudes and beliefs.

Happiness and positive Psychology:

Happiness, in psychology, a state of emotional well-being that a person experiences either in a narrow sense, when good things happen in a specific moment, or more broadly, as a positive evaluation of one's life and accomplishments overall—that is, subjective well-being. Happiness can be distinguished both from negative emotions (such as sadness, fear, and anger) and also from other positive emotions (such as affection, excitement, and interest). This emotion often co-occurs with a specific facial expression: the smile.

Happiness is an electrifying and elusive state. Philosophers, theologians, psychologists, and even economists have long sought to define it. And since the 1990s, a whole branch of psychology—**Positive Psychology**—has been dedicated to pinning it down. More than simply positive mood, happiness is a state of well-being that encompasses living a good life, one with a sense of meaning and deep contentment.

Feeling joyful has its health perks as well. A growing body of research also suggests that happiness can improve your physical health; feelings of positivity and fulfillment seem to benefit cardiovascular health, the immune system, inflammation levels, and blood pressure, among other things. Happiness has even been linked to a longer lifespan as well as a higher quality of life and well-being.

Attaining happiness is a global pursuit. Researchers find that people from every corner of the world rate happiness more important than other desirable personal outcomes, such as obtaining wealth, acquiring material goods, and getting into heaven.

Positive psychology is the branch of psychology that explores human flourishing. It asks how individuals can experience positive emotions, develop authentic relationships, find flow, achieve their goals, and build a meaningful life.

Propelled by University of Pennsylvania psychologist *Martin Seligman*, the movement emerged from the desire for a fundamental shift in psychology—from revolving around disease and distress to providing the knowledge and skills to cultivate growth, meaning, and fulfillment.

Determiners of happiness:

The basic tendency of human being is to express the emotions in his environment towards the stimulus. Basically, we express our emotions in two ways as positive or negative form. When we feel pleasure experience in our environment we express positive emotions and when we feel sad experience in our environment we express negative emotions. The mental state of expression of positive emotions in a pleasure form may be called happiness. Expression of positive emotions depends on the positive functioning of physical, psychological and social functioning. In other words we can say that happiness is the combination of physical, psychological and social wellbeing. Happiness has been a topic of interest for many centuries, starting with ancient Greek philosophy, post-enlightenment western-European moral philosophy to current quality-of-life and well-being research in social, political and economic sciences.

The **factor** that has been most closely linked to high levels of happiness is **social relationships**. Research consistently shows that people who have strong social relationships tend to report higher levels of well-being.

Many of the factors that may first come to mind do not seem to play a major role in happiness is **Wealth**. Income leads to smaller and smaller gains in happiness as income levels rise.

Health also plays a role in subjective well-being, but the associations are, again, surprisingly small. Surveys of representative populations show that objective measures (including doctors' reports, hospital visits, and lists of symptoms) are very weakly correlated with happiness. Subjective reports (such as a person's own evaluation of his or her health) tend to correlate more strongly, but even these associations are, at most, moderate in size.

Religious people tend to report greater happiness than nonreligious people, though the size of these effects varies depending on whether religious beliefs or religious behaviors are measured. Factors such as intelligence, education, and job prestige are also only slightly related to well-being.

In contrast to the relatively weak effects of external circumstance, research shows that **internal factors** play a strong role in subjective well-being. Individual differences in happiness-related variables emerge early in life, are stable over time, and are at least partially heritable. For instance, behavioral genetic studies show that identical twins who were reared apart are quite a bit more similar in their levels of happiness than are fraternal twins who were reared apart. This suggests that genes play an important role.

Personality, at least some of these genetic effects may be due to the influence of specific personality traits on happiness. People who are outgoing, assertive, and sociable tend to report more intense and more frequent positive emotions. This association is so robust that some psychologists have even suggested that the two constructs—extraversion and positive affect—are controlled by the same underlying physiological systems.

There is a popular notion that **the way that people view the world** should influence their happiness. Some people always look for the silver lining in things, and presumably this positive outlook shapes the emotions that they feel. A great deal of research has been conducted to examine the cognitive processes that affect a person's subjective well-being.

Many researchers examine the role that **social comparison processes** play in happiness. Initially, psychologists thought that people evaluated the conditions in their own lives by comparing them with the conditions in other people's lives. Those individuals who are worse off than the people around them (in other words, people who experience upward comparisons) should experience unhappiness; those individuals who are better off than the

people around them (in other words, people who experience downward comparisons) would experience happiness.

Goals and aspirations influence happiness. Not surprisingly, people who are rapidly approaching a goal tend to experience higher levels of happiness than people who are approaching a goal more slowly. But research also shows that simply having important goals is associated with greater happiness.

Levels of Happiness:

The pursuit of happiness is a human characteristic everyone has in common. For many, happiness seems to be an elusive goal, and it's easy to sink into misery and unhappiness. When this happens, people may turn to destructive substitutes like drugs or alcohol to mask the pain.

There are many different types of happiness that you can attain: joy, excitement, gratitude, pride, optimism, contentment and love, to name a few. Each person has something unique that makes them happy. As you become more self-aware, you'll be able to reach a new level of contentment.

Here, we will look at the different types of happiness as you examine the things in your life that make you happy.

The four levels of happiness represent your personal priorities and how you relate to others. The lower levels of happiness (Level 1 and Level 2) are more immediate feelings. Higher levels of happiness (Level 3 and Level 4) are more rational and related to your values and ethics.

Level 1: Pleasure

The first level of happiness includes the fundamental drivers in your life — physical pleasure and immediate gratification. This form of happiness is relatively short-lived and shallow. Examples include a delicious meal, new clothes or even listening to your favorite music. Although not inherently wrong, getting stuck at the first level of happiness is a constant roller coaster of seeking satisfaction in temporary desires.

Level 2: Passion

Whether it's a hobby or getting recognition at your job, being passionate about something is an excellent source of happiness. Yet it's usually based on a need to satisfy your ego.

Passion is needed to gain self-confidence. However, if you get stuck at Level 2, you may become obsessed with winning so much that you feel the need to keep others down. This type of happiness is not enduring.

Level 3: Purpose

When you feel like your talents and skills allow you to serve others and are part of something bigger, this can give you a sense of purpose, fulfillment and long-term happiness. Everyone wants to think that their life has meaning. Deeper, longer-lasting happiness grows as you make a positive difference in the world.

Level 4: Ultimate Good

The fourth level of happiness is known as ultimate good. This is a fundamental desire we have as human beings for perfect truth, goodness, beauty and love.

Many people find this form of happiness through their religious beliefs. Even those who don't believe in a higher power can find happiness in their pursuit of truth, beauty, love and goodness in them and in helping others. This level of happiness is often considered the most enduring and profound.

Signs of a Happy Person

Happy people live with purpose. They find joy in lasting relationships, working toward their goals, and living according to their values. The happy person is not enamored with material goods or luxury vacations. This person is fine with the simple pleasures of life—petting a dog, sitting under a tree, enjoying a cup of tea. Here are a few of the outward signs that someone is content.

- Gives and receives without torment
- Lives with meaning and purpose
- Does not feel entitled and has fewer expectations
- Does not hold grudges
- Does not register small annoyances
- Does not angst over yesterday and tomorrow

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- Does not play games
 - Is open to learning new things
 - Is high in humility and patience
 - Is not spiteful or insulting
 - Is often grateful
 - Is not a martyr or victim
 - Is not stingy with their happiness
 - Smiles and laughs readily
 - Goes with the flow
 - Practices compassion
 - Exercises self-care
 - Enjoys healthy relationships
 - Is happy for other people

Myths of Happiness

Misperceptions abound when it comes to what we think will make us happy. People often believe that happiness will be achieved once they reach a certain milestone, such as finding the perfect partner or landing a particular salary.

Humans, however, are excellent at adapting to new circumstances, which means that people will habituate to their new relationship or wealth, return to a baseline level of happiness, and seek out the next milestone. Fortunately, the same principle applies to setbacks—we are resilient and will most likely find happiness again.

The thoughts below exemplify the misconceptions about happiness:

"I'll be happy when I'm rich and successful."

"I'll be happy when I'm married to the right person."

"Landing my dream job will make me happy."

"I can't be happy when my relationship has fallen apart."

"I will never recover from this diagnosis."

"The best years of my life are over."

World Happiness Report:

The report of happiest countries in the world is a publication of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, a global initiative of the United Nations. Each annual report is accessible to the public on the World Happiness Report website.

The rankings of national happiness are derived from a global survey conducted by the polling company Gallup, Inc., known as the Cantril Ladder survey. In this survey, individuals are asked to envision a ladder, with a perfect life rated as ten and the worst possible life rated as 0. They are then asked to assess their current lives on this 0 to 10 scale. The report analyses these evaluations and correlates them with various life factors.

The life factor variables employed in the report reflect determinants commonly associated with disparities in national-level life evaluations. However, some variables, such as unemployment and inequality, are excluded due to the unavailability of comparable data across all countries.

The adoption of subjective measurements of well-being represents a bottom-up approach, empowering respondents to evaluate their well-being. The Cantril Ladder is valuable in this context as it allows respondents to anchor their assessment based on their perspectives.

In the report, experts from various fields, including economics, psychology, survey analysis, and national statistics, discuss how well-being measurements can effectively gauge a nation's progress and address other related topics.

Each report is structured into chapters that delve deeper into happiness-related issues, such as mental health, the tangible benefits of happiness, the role of ethics, policy implications, and connections to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) approach to measuring subjective well-being, as well as other international and national initiatives.

India's rank in happiness index:

India is currently positioned at 126th place out of 146 countries with Happiness score of 4.036, according to the World Happiness Report, classifying it as one of the world's least joyful nations. India's rank in the happiness index is lower than its neighboring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, and China.

This drop in happiness levels is closely linked to India's escalating mental health crisis, which has been exacerbated by the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Secrets of the happiest countries

Why do some countries routinely clinch the top positions in the World Happiness Report while others fail? When you look into what sets these happiest countries in the world apart from the rest of the world, several common themes emerge:

Strong social support: The happiest countries in the world have robust social support systems, which include healthcare, education, and unemployment benefits. This safety net ensures that citizens can face life's challenges with confidence.

Freedom and trust: High levels of freedom and trust in government and fellow citizens contribute to a sense of security and well-being.

Work-life balance: Most of the happiest countries in the world prioritise work-life balance, with shorter workweeks, longer paid vacations, and family-friendly policies.

Connection to nature: Access to beautiful natural landscapes and outdoor activities often plays a role in the overall happiness of the population.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion we can say that happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being characterized by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. A variety of biological, psychological, religious and philosophical approaches have striven to define happiness and identify its sources. The basic tendency of human being is to express the emotions in his environment towards the stimulus. Basically, we express our emotions in two ways as positive or negative form. When we feel pleasure experience in our environment we express positive emotions and when we feel sad experience in our environment we express negative emotions. The mental state of expression of positive emotions in a pleasure form may be called happiness. When we analyzed these approaches we find that happiness and wellbeing is a state of mind developed by three basic interlinked elements such as physical or structural health, psychological or mental health and social health.

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