

B.Sc PSYCHOLOGY

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6th SEM CORE COURSE

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

PSY6B05-03-POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

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CPA COLLEGE OF GLOBAL STUDIES

Prepared by

Linitha Zerín K

Assistant Professor

Department of Psychology

CPA College of Global Studies, Puthanathani

COURSE CODE	PSY6B05-03
TITLE OF THE COURSE	POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY
SEMESTER IN WHICH THE COURSE TO BE TAUGHT	6 th
NO. OF CREDITS	3
NO. OF CONTACT HOURS	48 (3hrs/week)

Objectives of the course:

- To familiarize the important concepts in positive psychology
- To understand the importance of wellbeing which allows people to understand what makes life worth living
- To give knowledge about the importance of factors contributing happiness

Course details

MODULE NO.	NAME OF MODULE	MODULE HOURS
1	Introduction to positive psychology	12
2	Well-being	12
3	Hope, Optimism and Flow	12
4	Happiness	12

MODULE 1: Introduction to positive psychology

Positive psychology

- Positive Psychology is the side of the science of human mind and behavior that studies and promotes the best of humanity.”
- Positive psychology is one of the newest branches of psychology to emerge. This particular area of psychology focuses on how to help human beings prosper and lead healthy, happy lives.
- *Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living*
- Positive psychology is the scientific and practical pursuit of optimal human functioning and it augments psychology’s long-term focus on weakness and illness.

Assumptions of Positive Psychology

- A major assumption of positive psychology is that the field of psychology has become unbalanced.
- Human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disorders and distress and therefore deserve equal attention from mental health practitioners. It’s time to challenge the disease model.
- Human beings have the potential for good and that we are motivated to pursue a good life.

Goals of Positive Psychology

- According to Martin Seligman’s goal of positive psychology was:
- To refocusing the entire field of psychology.
- To find elements of positive psychology represented in so many different areas of psychology, from physiological to clinical psychology.
- To restore balance within the discipline of psychology which was too much focused on negative aspects.

- To catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life.
- To improve understanding of positive human behaviors to balance the negative focus of much mainstream research & theory.
- To develop an empirically-based conceptual understanding and language for describing healthy human functioning that parallels our classification and understanding of mental illness.
- To boost present well - being.
- To prevent future problems.
- To make life worthwhile.

Eastern and western perspectives in positive psychology

- Both Western and Eastern history and philosophies have the concept of the “good life”
- Westerns: Emphasize optimal functioning and hopeful pursuits for better life
- Easterners: Optimal life as a spiritual journey involving others and result experiencing transcendence and enlightenment.

Western Perspective

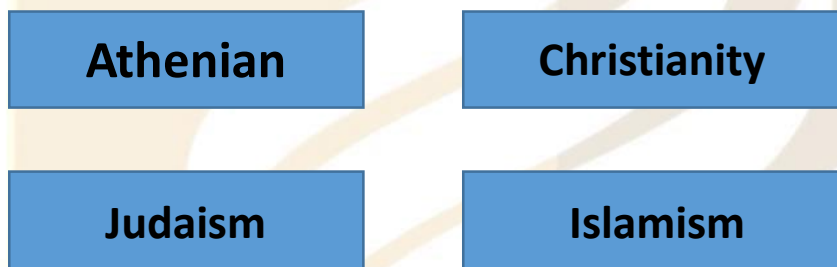
- Happiness in western society is defined as gaining self-esteem, self-confidence, being successful, being attractive, being equal, being treated with respect, being able to assert one’s rights and enjoy pleasures and comforts of life
- Two constructs- hope and uniqueness
- HOPE:
 - Goal focuses thinking

- Transition from various ages
- Guiding, influential and survival force

The need for uniqueness:

- Strong appeal to many and maintaining a degree of difference
- Also called a motive for distinctiveness
- Depends on how the information is being encoded, what are the various emotional responses and behavioral actions toward that information
- Display rules and uniqueness attribute

Types of western approaches:



Athenian

- Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato introduced 11 moral virtues
- Courage, Moderation, Generosity, Munificence, Magnificence, Even temper, Friendliness, Truthfulness, Wit, Justice, Friendship
- Government should take the responsibility of the development of virtue in the society through early education.
- *Polis* is essential for helping the average individual to self-actualize with regard to virtue.
- Life of order ensures that one could rise above hedonistic desire and become truly virtuous.
- Good human virtue create a community and provide a good model for others.

Christianity

- The virtues of faith, hope and charity.
- “Seven Heavenly Virtues” by Thomas Aquinas
 1. Fortitude
 2. Justice
 3. Temperance
 4. Wisdom
 5. Faith
 6. Hope
 7. Charity
- Ten Commandments given by Moses in the Old Testament.
- Special importance: to the virtue of wisdom.

Judaism

- The Talmud and Pentarch.
- The Pirke Avot, or Fathers directives are given on how to live life as an ethical follower of Judaism.
- Lessons include being a hospitable host particularly to the poor, being fair in decision making and judgments and seeking peace.

Islamism

- Incorporates virtues as moral obligations.
- Gratitude (e.g., to Allah for His benevolence)
- Love (of Allah because of His forgiveness)
- Kindness (especially toward parents)

- Justice (emphasizing fraternity and equality of all)
- Courage (acts of bravery) are valued.
- Emphasis on altruism.
- Zakat (alms)

Eastern perspective

- Happiness – Internal state of mind
- Being in peace
- Doing one's duties
- Keeping others happy
- Being responsible and respectful to oneself, family and society.
- And enjoying life as it goes with oneself, family and others.
- Viewing of life involves a desire for balance for optimal functioning.
- Moving with the cycle of life and moving towards enlightenment.
- Seek to transcend the human and material plane to rise to the spiritual plane.
- Key Construct in Eastern perspective – Compassion & Harmony

Types of Eastern perspective

1. Confucianism
2. Taoism
3. Buddhism
4. Hinduism

MODULE 2

WELL - BEING

- Well-being is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and the ability to manage stress.
- More generally, well-being is just feeling well.
- Well-being is something sought by just about everyone because it includes so many positive things — feeling happy, healthy, socially connected, and purposeful.

Subjective well-being:

- According to Diener, SWB is “people’s cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives.”
- Subjective well-being influences subjects such as physical health and mental health, not only at the individual level but through our relationships.
- The cumulative effect on the physical and mental health of individuals rolls up to have a significant impact on groups and organizations and communities as well.

Psychological well – being:

- Psychological well-being refers to inter- and intra-individual levels of positive functioning that can include one’s relatedness with others and self-referent attitudes that include one’s sense of mastery and personal growth.

Perspective on well- being: hedonic and eudaimonic:

- Hedonic wellbeing is based on the notion that increased pleasure and decreased pain leads to happiness.
- Hedonic concepts are based on the notion of subjective wellbeing.

- Subjective wellbeing is a scientific term that is commonly used to denote the 'happy or good life'. It refers to the sort of pleasure or happiness that we derive from doing what we like or avoid doing what we do not like.
- Hence, hedonism is described as enjoyment that can include a number of things that different people enjoy. eg: food
- Eudaimonic well-being refers to the subjective experiences associated with eudaimonia or living a life of virtue in pursuit of human excellence.
- The phenomenological experiences derived from such living include self-actualization, personal expressiveness, and vitality.
- Flourishing. Realization of potentials reflecting the true self. Happiness that comes from the pursuit of virtue or excellence. eg: Volunteering one's time.

Theories of well-being:

1. Desire Theories

- According to desire theories, what makes your life go well for you is simply to get whatever it is that you want, desire, or prefer.
- Desire theories hold that well-being consists in the satisfaction of desires or preferences.
- Desire theories can easily account for our reluctance to plug into the experience machine.
- But if we care about anything outside of our own heads, then the experience machine will leave those desires unfulfilled.
- A "real" life may contain less happiness, but more desire-fulfilment, and hence more well-being according to desire theories.

- Desire theories may be motivated by the thought that what makes your life go well for you must ultimately be up to you.

2. Objective List Theories

- Objective list theories hold that there are a variety of objectively valuable things that contribute to one's well-being.
- Both hedonism and desire theories are monist.
- They suggest that well-being consists of a single thing— either happiness or desire satisfaction.
- Objective list theories do not necessarily imply that people would benefit from being forced to pursue objective goods against their will. Objective list theories are thus in a good position to explain which preference-changes are good or bad for you. And the inclusion of values beyond just happiness yields more plausible verdicts than hedonism in "experience machine" cases.

PERMA Theory of Well-Being

- Dr. Seligman's PERMA™ theory of well-being is an attempt to answer these fundamental questions. There are five building blocks that enable flourishing – Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment.
- 1. Positive Emotion: - This route to well-being is hedonic – increasing positive emotion. Within limits, we can increase our positive emotion about the past, our positive emotion about the present and our positive emotion about the future.
- 2. Engagement:- Engagement is an experience in which someone fully deploys their skills, strengths, and attention for a challenging task.

- 3. Relationships:- Relationships are fundamental to well-being. The experiences that contribute to well-being are often amplified through our relationships, for example, great joy, meaning, laughter, a feeling of belonging, and pride in accomplishment.
- 4. Meaning:- A sense of meaning and purpose can be derived from belonging to and serving something bigger than the self.
- 5. Accomplishment:- People pursue achievement, competence, success, and mastery for its own sake, in a variety of domains, including the workplace, sports, games, hobbies, etc. People pursue accomplishment even when it does not necessarily lead to positive emotion, meaning, or relationships.

MODULE 3

Optimism:

- Optimism is a mental attitude characterized by hope and confidence in success and a positive future. Optimists tend to view hardships as learning experiences or temporary setbacks. Even the most miserable day holds the promise for them that "tomorrow will probably be better."
- Optimists expect good things to happen, whereas pessimists instead predict unfavorable outcomes. Optimistic attitudes are linked to several benefits, including better coping skills, lower stress levels, better physical health, and higher persistence when pursuing goals.

Hope:

- Hope, a construct closely related to optimism, has been conceptualized by the late professor Rick Snyder as involving two main components: the ability to plan pathways to desired goals despite obstacles, as agency or motivation to use this pathways. Hope is the sum of these two components, Where we are certain of achieving our goals.

Hope therapy:

- Hope therapy is derived from Snyder's hope theory and ideas drawn from cognitive behaviour therapy, solution-focused therapy and narrative therapy. Hope therapy aims to help clients formulate clear goals, and reframe obstacles as challenges to be overcome.

Mindfulness:

- Mindfulness typically suggests a state of mind: one of calmness, gratitude, and compassion that can have a profound effect on us.

- Shapiro describes the three vital psychological elements of mindfulness as follows:
- *Intention* – how we use our heart as our compass, directing and reflecting our most profound hopes and values;
- *Attention* – training and grounding our mind in the present moment;
- *Attitude* – paying attention with an attitude of compassion and curiosity.

Expectationism:

- Expectationism is the name of the preventative strategy for reducing lifestyle-dependent disease, accidents, violence, and death rate per head of population by enhancing people's perceived value of the future. This can be achieved by four classes of interventions:
 1. Increase the perceived benefit of safe behaviour by, for example, highlighting the advantages of it;
 2. Decrease the perceived cost of safe behaviour;
 3. Increase the perceived cost of risky behaviour; and
 4. Decrease the perceived benefit of risky behaviour.
- **Risk homeostasis theory:**
- Risk homeostasis theory states that, for any activity, people accept a particular level of subjectively evaluated risk to their health and safety in order to gain from a range of benefits associated with that activity. Wilde refers to this level of accepted risk as “target level of risk.”

Time perspective :-

- Time Perspective is a way for Psychologists to categorise how we function in the context of the past, present or future, where our preference is, and how that affects our behaviour.

Neurobiology of optimism:

- One study found that optimism is strongly related to preparedness, such as readiness to deal with setbacks and take advantage of opportunities.

- Recent brain imaging studies have suggested that specific brain regions are associated with optimism.
- That an increased amount of gray matter in the putamen region of the brain correlates with optimism.
- Participants rated their experiences for vividness, emotional valence, and other variables, and completed dispositional optimism scales.
- Enhanced activation of the amygdala and in the rostral anterior cingulate cortex were found when participants were imagining positive future events.
- The act of imagining a positive activates two brain areas:
 - Amygdala
 - Rostral Anterior Cingulate Cortex
- It is their belief that having an optimistic outlook on life can lead to a more enjoyable experience of life.
- And the phrase “LIFE IS GOOD” is what got me interested in the implications that optimism may have on our neurobiology as humans.
- They believe that there may be something on a neurobiological level that is capable of affecting one’s ability to be optimistic.
- RACC was correlated with trait optimism.
- Optimism not only reduces stress, but it also promotes the production of the neurotransmitter dopamine.
- The amygdala is responsible for processing strong emotions, such as fear, pleasure, and anger.
- The RACC is responsible for a host of cognitive functions, including emotional expression, attention allocation, and mood regulation.

Flow

- Flow is a mental state of being fully immersed, focused, and involved in an activity, with a feeling of enjoyment and a loss of self-awareness and sense of time.
- Psychological Flow captures the positive mental state of being completely absorbed, focused, and involved in your activities at a certain point in time, as well as deriving enjoyment from being engaged in that activity.

Self-determination theory:

- Self-determination theory suggests that people are motivated to grow and change by three innate and universal psychological needs.
- 1-Competence
- 2-Connection and Relatedness
- 3-Autonomy

Intrinsic motivation:

- Intrinsic motivation is a type of motivation that comes from within, rather than from external rewards.
- It involves doing things because they are enjoyable, satisfying, or challenging, or because they allow us to explore, learn, and actualize our potentials.
- Intrinsic motivation can enhance performance and lead to flow, a state of complete absorption in an activity.
- Intrinsic motivation is often contrasted with extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external benefits.

Metamotivation:

- Metamotivation is a term coined by Abraham Maslow to describe the motivation of people who are self-actualized and striving beyond the scope of their basic needs to reach their full potential.
- Metamotivation is what motivates and impels an individual toward self-actualization and excellence. Metamotivation is distinct from motivation operating in the lower level needs, and it emerges after the lower needs are satisfied.

Reversal theory:

- Reversal theory is a theory of personality, motivation and emotion in the field of psychology. It focuses on the dynamic qualities of normal human experience to describe how a person regularly reverses between psychological states, reflecting their motivational style and the meaning they attach to a given situation at a given time.
- The theory distinctively proposes that human experience is structurally organized into metamotivational domains, of which four have been identified. Each domain consists

of a pair of opposing values or motives, so that only one of each pair can be experienced in any given moment.

Resilience:

- Resilience is the process of being able to adapt well and bounce back quickly in times of stress.
- This stress may manifest as family or relationship problems, serious health problems, problems in the workplace or even financial problems to name a few.

Source of resilience:

- **Source of resilience in children:-**

a) Protective factors within the child include:

- Good intellectual and problem solving abilities.
- An easy going temperament and a personality that can adapt to change.
- A positive self image and personal effectiveness.
- An optimistic outlook.
- Ability to regulate and control emotions and impulses.
- Individual talents that are valued by the individual and by his or her culture.
- A healthy sense of humor.

b) Protective factors within the family include:

- Dose relationships with parents or other primary caregivers.
- Warm and supportive parenting the provide clear expectations and rules.
- An emotionally positive family with minimum conflict between parents.
- A structured and organized home environment.
- Parents who are involved in their child's education.
- Parents who have adequate financial resources.

c) Protective factors within the community include:

- Going to a good school.
- Involvement in social organizations within the school and community.
- Living in a neighborhood of involved and caring people who address problems and promote community spirit.
- Living in a safe neighborhood.
- Easy availability of competent and responsive emergency public health and social services.

Sources of resilience in adulthood and later Life:

Many of the factors that contribute to resilience responses in childhood also contribute to adult resilience. The six dimensions describe aspects of an individual's personality, self-concept, competence and social relationships that represent resources for effective living.

The six dimensions are described below,

1. Self-acceptance:

Self-acceptance defines a person who has a positive attitude toward himself or herself. And accepts all the varied aspects of self, including both strengths and weaknesses. Such a person feels positive about his or her life so far. Self-acceptance means you embrace and like who you are.

2. Personal growth:

Personal growth refers to a person's feelings of continued development and effectiveness, and as openness to new experiences and challenges. Personal growth is exhibited by a person who is still excited about life and learning new things.

3. Purpose in life:

Purpose in life means that you have goals and beliefs that give direction to your life, your life has meaning and purpose, perhaps because of satisfying work, religious beliefs, or devotion to a cause or to the needs of others. To have purpose means that you feel you are making a positive difference in the world and that your life is personally meaningful.

4. Environmental mastery:

Mastery refers to a feeling of competence and the ability to manage the complex environment of today's fast paced life. Mastery is reflected in a person's ability to create a personally suitable living situation, including successful management of work, finances, family, housing, health, and all the conditions necessary for a successful life.

5. Autonomy:

Autonomous people are comfortable with self-direction taking initiative, and working independently. Such people possess internal standards that guide their actions and allow them to resist negative social pressures from others being your own person and following your own values and interests would express a sense of autonomy.

6. Positive relations with others:

People who have positive relations have warm satisfying and trusting interaction with others and are capable of empathy and intimacy. Positive relations refer to the quality rather than the quantity of our relationships having good friends a satisfying marriage and supportive relations with co- workers all express this dimension.

Mindfulness meditation:

- Spending too much time planning, problem-solving, daydreaming, or thinking negative or random thoughts can be draining. It can also make you more likely to experience stress, anxiety and symptoms of depression. Practicing mindfulness exercises can help you direct your attention away from this kind of thinking and engage with the world around you.
- Psychologists have found that mindfulness meditation changes our brain and biology in positive ways, improving mental and physical health.
- Meditation can be defined in many ways. But a simple way to think of it is training your attention to achieve a mental state of calm concentration and positive emotions.
- Mindfulness is one of the most popular meditation techniques. It has two main parts: attention and acceptance.

MODULE 4

Positive Emotions:

- Most people like to feel good, and positive emotions just plain feel good.
- They don't necessarily need a reason or cause behind them for us to enjoy them; we just do.
- Experiencing emotions like happiness, excitement, joy, hope, and inspiration is vital for anyone who wants to lead a happy and healthy life.
- Luckily, you don't need to experience them all the time to reap the benefits of positive emotions. These often-fleeting moments can be the ones that make all the hard work and struggling in life worth it, the spice that brings flavor to your life.
- Before you continue, we thought you might like to. These science-based exercises will not only enhance your ability to understand and work with your emotions but will also give you the tools to foster the emotional intelligence of your clients, students, or employees. give you the tools to foster the emotional intelligence of your clients, students, or employees.

Positive affectivity:

- (PA) is a human characteristic that describes how much people experience positive affects (sensations, emotions, sentiments); and as a consequence how they interact with others and with their surroundings.
- People with high positive affectivity are typically enthusiastic, energetic, confident, active, and alert. Research has linked positive affectivity with an increase in longevity, better sleep, and a decrease in stress hormones.
- People with a high positive affectivity have healthier coping styles, more positive self-qualities, and are more goal oriented. Positive affectivity also promotes an open-minded attitude, sociability, and helpfulness.
- Those having low levels of positive affectivity (and high levels of negative affectivity) are characterized by sadness, lethargy, distress, and un-pleasurable engagement (see negative affectivity).
- Low levels of positive affect are correlated with social anxiety and depression, due to decreased levels of dopamine.

Negative emotion:

- Emotions – Emotions are regarded as ‘lower level’ responses. They first occur in the sub cortical areas of the brain such as the amygdala and the ventral medial prefrontal cortices. These areas are responsible for producing biochemical reactions that have a direct impact on your physical state.
- Pam (2013) defines negative emotions “as an unpleasant or unhappy emotion which is evoked in individuals to express a negative effect towards an event or person.” Reading through the list of Eckman’s basic emotions, it’s quite easy to determine those that might be referred to as ‘negative’ emotions.
- While we can use the label negative, with what we know about emotions, it’s important to acknowledge that all emotions are completely normal to experience. They are a part of our ingrained DNA.
- What is more important, is understanding when and why negative emotions might arise, and developing positive behaviors to address them.

Negative affectivity:

- Negative affect, is a personality variable that involves the experience of negative emotions and poor self-concept.
- Negative affectivity subsumes a variety of negative emotions, including anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear, and nervousness.
- Low negative affectivity is characterized by frequent states of calmness and serenity, along with states of confidence, activeness, and great enthusiasm.
- Individuals differ in negative emotional reactivity. Trait negative affectivity roughly corresponds to the dominant personality factor of anxiety/neuroticism that is found within the Big Five personality traits as emotional stability.
- The Big Five are characterized as openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.
- Neuroticism can plague an individual with severe mood swings, frequent sadness, worry, and being easily disturbed, and predicts the development and onset of all “common” mental disorders.
- Research shows that negative affectivity relates to different classes of variables: Self-reported stress and (poor) coping skills, health complaints, and frequency of unpleasant events.
- Weight gain and mental health complaints are often experienced as well.

- Negative affect arousal mechanisms can induce negative affective states as evidenced by a study conducted by Stanley S. Seidner on negative arousal and white noise.
- The study quantified reactions from Mexican and Puerto Rican participants in response to the devaluation of speakers from other ethnic origins.

Happiness:

- In general, happiness is understood as the positive emotions we have in regards to the pleasurable activities we take part in through our daily lives. Pleasure, comfort, gratitude, hope, and inspiration are examples of positive emotions that increase our Every one of us seeks happiness. It's natural to want to feel good. But it's not always easy, and our strategies aren't always the best.
- Four important F's for happiness at the individual level are:
- Faith, Form/fitness, Family, Friends
- At the social level, important factors include environmental quality, equality, social capital.

Effects of happiness:

- Research is showing that bringing more happiness into your life has far more benefits than merely feeling good.
- 6 Proven Health Benefits of Happiness
- 1. Improved Heart Health.
- 2. Ability to Combat Stress More Effectively.
- 3. A Stronger Immune System.
- 4. Overall Healthier Lifestyle.
- 5. Can Help Reduce Pain.
- 6. Increased Life Longevity.

Measurements of happiness:

- Happiness can be measured by these three factors: the presence of positive emotions, the absence of negative emotions, and life satisfaction. It is a uniquely subjective experience, which means that nobody is better at reporting on someone's happiness than the individuals themselves.
- The Top Happiness Scales / Questionnaires:
- Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle and Hill)
- Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper)
- Satisfaction with Life Scale (Deiner, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin)
- Ryff's psychological wellbeing-scale
- Panas Scale (Watson, Clark, Tellegen)
- The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) is a 4-item self-report measure developed to assess an individual's overall happiness as measured through self-evaluation. The response format is a 7-point Likert-type scale.

Causes of happiness:

- Identifying factors that contribute to happiness is not a simple matter. Pleasure and the pursuit of pleasure may sometimes, but not always, lead to happiness. As a species we have evolved so that certain types of situations make us happy while others lead to the experience of distress.
- Individual differences in happiness may be partly accounted for by differences in personality which are partially genetically determined. There is also little doubt that certain kinds of environments are conducive to happiness or to providing people with opportunities to develop the skills required to achieve happiness.

1. Personality traits and happiness

2. Genetic and environmental basis for personality traits
3. Heritability of a happiness set-point

Happiness and Genetic makeup:

- Research shows that people's genetic makeup is responsible for about 50 percent of their happiness.
- Genes play a very important role in people's personalities, including how they tend to respond to what happens to them. Our genes determine the structure and activity of our brains. Some lucky people's brains are structured in ways that promote positive emotions, and some of us have brains that respond more easily to negative emotions.
- Many studies have conclusively shown that about 50% of the variability that we see in the degree to which people experience positive and negative emotions is due to genetic factors.
- For example, research shows that identical twins are more similar in their level of happiness-or unhappiness- than regular brothers and sisters. That's true even if the twins have been separated at birth and raised by different families. Their identical genes create identical brains that make them similar in how happy-or unhappy- they are. They won't be identical in happiness, of course, because genetic influences account for only 50% of happiness. But identical twins are certainly more similar emotionally than other siblings.
- You can see inborn differences in happiness in very young infants, long before their circumstances have affected them very much. Some babies are naturally more bubbly and happy, and other babies are more unhappy and fussy.

Happiness enhancement:

- Fordyce, Fava et al. and Lichter et al. have all developed and evaluated community-based training programmes for enhancing happiness which include elements of the overall set of happiness-enhancement strategies.
- In addition, Seligman has developed a highly effective programme to promote optimism in children and adults. However, Seligman (2002) argues that an important distinction may be made between the pleasant life and the good life. The pleasant life may be achieved by pursuing positive emotions using strategies.
- In contrast, the good life involves using signature strengths to obtain gratifications in important areas of life such as family relationships and work.
- Activities in which signature strengths are used are intrinsically motivated and result in experiences such as flow and absorption.

Happiness across life span:

- Adolescence has not been found to be an unhappy period of life compared to other ages. Regarding happiness in old age, we tend to hold negative expectations about aging.
- Affective forecasting is the study of people's predictions about the emotional effects of future life events. People consistently overestimate the impact of both positive and negative events.
- To evaluate the accuracy of an affective forecast, researchers compare an individual's predictions about the emotional impact of specific events to the real life reactions of people who actually experience those events.

Gender and happiness:

- Men and women are, on average, equally likely to report feeling happy and satisfied with their lives as a whole. For example, one study of 18,000 college students representing 39 different countries found no significant gender differences. An extensive literature documents the relationship between marriage and higher levels of SWB.
- In their meta-analytic review of research, Haring, Stock, and Okun (1984) concluded that men showed a slight tendency to report higher levels of well-being than women.

- On the other hand, a meta-analysis by Wood, Rhodes, and Whelan (1989) reported a similar, slight tendency toward more happiness, but for women rather than men. The emphasis here is on the word "slight." Two other reviews show that gender accounts for less than 1% of the difference in people's reported levels of well-being. In other words, knowing a person's gender, tests, situations, and won't tell you much about his or her happiness.

Marriage and happiness:

- The marriage-happiness relationship has consistently been demonstrated in large-scale surveys of Americans and Europeans. A meta-analytic review of nearly 100 studies found marriage to be a strong predictor of life satisfaction, happiness, and overall well-being. The positive effects of marriage are large. One national survey of 35,000 people in the United States found that the percentage of married adults who said they were "very happy" (40%). It was nearly double that of those who never married (26%).
- Marriage has the potential to provide companionship, intimacy, love, affection, and social support in times of crisis. The roles of spouse and parent may also provide opportunities for personal growth. And also the development of new competencies that increase self-esteem and satisfaction.

Gender Differences in the Benefits of Marriage:

- Two final issues in the marriage-happiness relationship involve the question of whether men or women benefit the most from marriage, and whether the benefits of marriage have declined over time. Findings for both issues are mixed. Some studies suggest that men experience more emotional benefits in terms of increases in positive emotions and protection against depression. However, other research finds no gender differences in life satisfaction, but does suggest that the effects of divorce or separation fall along gender lines, with women experiencing more depression, and men more alcohol abuse. Myers argues that these mixed results do not alter the basic fact shown in many studies that the gap in happiness between married and unmarried people is about the same for men and for women.
- Divorced individuals have higher rates of divorce in subsequent marriages, perhaps because they are less able to make a marriage work and may therefore be less happy as a result of marriage.
- Cohabiting couples undoubtedly benefit from their relationships even though they aren't counted as married. Together, these two facts would decrease the difference

between the married and never-married populations, but not the actual benefits of marriage.

- Whether marriage makes us happier may be less important than whether it makes us healthier. A good deal of research shows the health benefits of marriage. Differences between hedonic and eudaimonic definitions of well-being are evidenced by the fact that some factors that promote health may also mortgage happiness, at least in the short run.

Money and happiness:

- People living in rich nations are, on average, happier than those living in poor nations; however, this conclusion must be tempered by all the factors that co-vary with wealth that may be responsible for the relationship. Among individuals within a particular country, the money-happiness correlation is quite small and primarily evident among the very poor. The role of income in fulfilling basic needs helps explain the importance of money for people living in poverty.
- At the individual level, the most relevant evidence for evaluating the importance of money comes from longitudinal studies that track the impact of increased or decreased income. Longitudinal studies follow the same individual over time. If money has a consistent relationship to happiness, then as a person's income goes up or down, so should his or her level of happiness.
- Several studies report no effect of increased income on well-being and some have even found increased happiness associated with decreased income. Studies of pay raises also show mixed results. Pay increases produce only short-term gains in satisfaction and pay reductions seem to have little or no effect.
- A number of studies suggest that income has a small correlation with happiness and life satisfaction that is independent of many individual and social variables. Income appears to have a direct, but relatively small correlation with well-being.
- In comparison, being married, being employed, and having supportive relationships are variables that make much more substantial contributions to happiness.

Culture's influence on happiness:

- In the past few decades, scores of studies have explored the influence of culture on happiness or Subjective Well Being (SWB). There is a lot that we share when it comes to our experience of happiness.

- Happiness is the most accurately recognized expression across cultures. Cross-cultural convergence has also been reported in appraisal mechanisms, with similar circumstances around the world appearing to make us joyful, including situations and events that are pleasant, conducive to our goals, needs, and desires, and those that elicit our internal attributions.
- We also express similar physiological behaviour when we are happy.
- People across cultures consider happiness as one of their most cherished personal goals. Even national campaigns and movements are being launched for building happier societies.

Close relationship and happiness:

- Kinship
- Close supportive relationships between parents and children, between siblings, and between extended family members enhance the social support available to all family members. This social support enhances subjective well-being and from an evolutionary perspective we are 'hard-wired' to derive happiness from this contact with our kinship network.
- There are certain things that we can do to enhance the benefits of kinship on our experience of happiness.
- Keep in regular contact with members of your family. Plan your lifestyle to allow you to maintain closer physical contact with our kinship network.
- Maintaining contact with family members increases social support and this brings not only happiness but also improve immune system functioning.
- Maintaining contact with the extended family network reduces the chances of domestic violence and child abuse, because it pierces the veil of privacy that goes with being an isolated nuclear family so common in cases of domestic violence.

Friendship

- Maintaining a few close confiding relationships has been found to correlate with happiness and subjective well-being. Confiding relationships are probably associated with happiness for three reasons.
- First, happy people may be often selected as friends and confidants, because they are more attractive companions than miserable people. They also help others more than depressed people who are self-focused and less altruistic.

- Second, confiding relationships meet needs for affiliation and so make us feel happy and satisfied.
- Third, close friendships provide social support.
- These research findings and insights on friendship from evolutionary psychology have implications for how we can enhance our happiness through relationships with friends.
- Make a few good close friends and keep in touch with them. If you want to make good friends, choose work or leisure activities where you are likely to meet people who share similar interests to you and are similar in overall abilities, status and life experience to you, since friendships between people who are more similar have been shown to be deeper than those between dissimilar people.

