Personal Happiness: Does Health and Family Communication have more Influence than Quantity of Money and Material Goods?

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Sympatia

Friendly, positive behavior to strangers

Positive behavior, but are these people actually happy?
Studying Happiness

Difficult to define "happiness" in a country

So, study levels of happiness

Replicate results from Hellevik (2003) by creating a survey
Research Site
Methods: Outline

1. Created Survey
2. Demographic Information: Age, Gender, Education, Income, Family Size, etc.
3. 21 Questions: Rate each question from 1-5 to determine level of happiness
Happiness Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please be aware that completion of this survey is entirely voluntary, meaning you may decline to participate or stop at any time. All responses will be kept confidential.

Gender: M F Other

Age: ______

Family Size: _________

Children: Y N

Monthly income: _________

Annual income: _________

Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual Homosexual Other

Religion: _________

Country of Birth: _________

Town: _______________

Living Situation: Single Married Family Married with Family In a Relationship

Financially Support Dependents: Y N

Occupation: ____________

How many years of education? Primary Secondary University Graduate Level

Know multiple languages? Y N

If yes, which ones? _____________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very Unhappy</th>
<th>Unhappy</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Happy</th>
<th>Very Happy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To own a lot of material goods.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To cook dinner at home with fresh food.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To buy fast food.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial security.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigger sized family.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not expensive healthcare.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family communication.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent sunshine.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying healthy throughout the year.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in community organizations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working for money.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of money made each month.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a national army.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have the freedom to practice any religion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of medications available.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood security.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have equal rights between men and women.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methods: Outline

- Validated Survey
- 4 Questions asking person to rate how happy he/she feels in general
- Rate each question from 1-7 (very much agree or very much disagree)
Subjective Happiness Scale

Instructions to participants: For each of the following statements and/or questions, please circle the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing you.

1. In general, I consider myself:
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   not a very happy person
   a very happy person

2. Compared to most of my peers, I consider myself:
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   less happy
   more happy

3. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   not at all
   a great deal

4. Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extend does this characterization describe you?
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   not at all
   a great deal
Randomly selected participants in downtown San Ramon and at the UCR in San Ramon and Grecia

Avoided participants who appeared stressed or really busy

Needed an escort to avoid inappropriate behavior from the men
Participants

• Total of 197 participants
• 104 Male, 92 Female, 1 Unknown
• Majority in the “16-20” age bracket
• Majority were students
• Majority from a small town
Studying Happiness

Main Objectives

- Replicate results found in Norway
  - Family Wellness & Health increase happiness more than Income & Material Possessions
- Compare my survey to a valid survey
- Estimate differences in survey question responses according to:
  - Age group
  - Gender
  - Family Size
  - Type of job
Results: Four Important Questions

Mean responses of all 21 questions on the created survey. San Ramón, Costa Rica. April-May 2012.

MG: Material Goods
FC: Family Communication
N: Nature
GH: Good Health
QM: Quantity of Money
NA: National Army
Hypothesis was supported

Lowest mean: National Army

Highest means: Living in Nature and Good Health

Females are happier with equal gender rights than males

Need more time and participants to better this study

Need more questions to identify actual happiness
Acknowledgments

- All of ACM Staff
- All advisors, specifically Daniel Rojas
- Support from back home, both friends, family, and LFC
- Both Urban and Rural Host Families, friends in the program and Piedades Sur
- My escort, Greivin Rojas
- All teachers and students at the UCR