

An Improved Assessment Tool on Holistic Living

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the multifaceted dimensions of happiness among students, exploring eight significant factors identified through a comprehensive questionnaire consisting of 148 questions. The scope of the research extends to understanding the nuanced aspects of well-being within the student demographic. Employing rigorous factor analysis, the study delves into the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, ensuring its robustness as a measurement tool for assessing various dimensions of happiness. Results of the study reveal a rich tapestry of factors contributing to student happiness, ranging from academic satisfaction and social connectedness to personal growth and emotional well-being. Notably, the reliability of the questionnaire is exceptionally high, with a reliability coefficient of 0.918, affirming its suitability for capturing the complexities of student well-being. These findings not only align with the initial research questions but also provide novel perspectives, enriching the discourse on happiness within the educational context. Key features of the study include the commendable reliability, ensuring the accuracy and consistency of the instrument in measuring happiness-related constructs. Furthermore, the thorough validation process guarantees the instrument's efficacy, offering a nuanced understanding of individual contentment within the student demographic. The practical implications of these findings extend to educators, counsellors, and policymakers, providing valuable insights for interventions aimed at fostering holistic well-being among students. In conclusion, this research contributes significantly to the understanding of happiness among students, offering a robust measurement tool, novel insights, and practical implications that can inform future interventions and policies in the realm of positive psychology and education.

Keywords: Happiness, Physical well-being, social well-being, Mental well-being, Spiritual well-being, Questionnaire development, Pilot study, Reliability, Validity, Factor Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Happiness, a cherished pursuit universally, assumes a unique and intricate tapestry of meanings when viewed through the cultural lens of India. It transcends the boundaries of conventional contentment, weaving together vibrant threads of cultural, social, and spiritual significance that characterize the diverse Indian landscape. This study embarks on a profound journey, seeking to define and unravel the complexities of happiness within the rich and

dynamic context of India, acknowledging its multifaceted nature.

Within the intricate framework of Indian culture, we wholeheartedly embrace four foundational dimensions that wield substantial influence on the fabric of happiness: physical well-being, social well-being, mental well-being, and spiritual well-being. These dimensions transcend the confines of mere emotional satisfaction, encapsulating the profound significance of physical health, harmonious social connections, psychological

resilience, and spiritual fulfillment. In the cultural symphony of India, this holistic approach to well-being resonates deeply, echoing the interconnectedness of these dimensions in shaping the nuanced experience of happiness for individuals within this diverse and culturally rich nation.

Physical Well-being: Physical well-being is not just a facet but a fundamental pillar in the intricate architecture of an individual's holistic health and happiness. The evidence supporting the positive impact of regular physical activity on mental health is robust and compelling, as demonstrated in studies such as the notable work by Warburton et al. (2010)[1]. Their findings go beyond the common understanding of exercise merely as a physical fitness tool; instead, it emerges as a powerful tool in reducing stress levels, elevating mood, and even boosting cognitive function. emphasis on the profound interplay between physical activity and mental well-being is echoed by global health advocates, including the World Health Organization (WHO)[2]. The WHO not only recognizes but actively promotes preventive healthcare measures that prioritize and foster physical well-being on a global scale. This advocacy underscores the holistic approach needed to address health concerns comprehensively, acknowledging the symbiotic relationship between physical and mental dimensions of well-being. Delving deeper into the intricate tapestry of well-being, the research conducted by Diener and Seligman[3] provides crucial insights into the undeniable correlation between physical health and subjective well-being. Their work reinforces the notion that a person's overall happiness is intricately connected to their physical state. This interconnectedness highlights the necessity of a comprehensive understanding—one that recognizes and addresses both the physical and mental dimensions of well-being. In navigating the complex landscape of well-being, adopting a multifaceted approach becomes indispensable. Beyond the immediate benefits of physical activity, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is emphasized by experts globally, including the WHO[2]. This encompasses aspects beyond exercise, including a balanced

diet and sufficient sleep. The integration of these elements becomes pivotal in the pursuit of overall well-being, as they collectively contribute to a healthier and happier life. In essence, recognizing physical well-being as a cornerstone in the pursuit of happiness requires a holistic lens. It involves acknowledging the intricate dance between physical and mental health, understanding that true well-being emerges when both dimensions are nurtured and prioritized. This comprehensive perspective provides a nuanced understanding of the factors that contribute to happiness, offering a roadmap for individuals and societies to navigate the intricate terrain of well-being.

Social Well-being: Social well-being delves into the intricate tapestry of an individual's social connections, emphasizing the paramount importance of positive relationships in contributing to their overall happiness. A plethora of research, spanning influential studies by Diener and Seligman (2002), the insightful exploration by Thoits (2011), and the comprehensive findings of Lyubomirsky et al. (2005), consistently underscores the profound impact of social interactions on subjective well-being. Positive social connections, robust community engagement, and a network of reliable social support emerge as pivotal factors in fostering the intricate fabric of social well-being. The authoritative World Happiness Report (2021) further solidifies these findings, highlighting the intrinsic correlation between social connectedness and the holistic spectrum of overall well-being. Additionally, the illuminating work of Helliwell et al. (2020) sheds valuable light on the significance of social trust and communal relationships, shaping happiness at both individual and societal levels. The amalgamation of this collective evidence accentuates the integral role of social well-being, emphasizing the fundamental nature of nurturing positive social connections for individual and collective contentment.

Mental Well-being: Mental well-being is a comprehensive aspect of an individual's health, encompassing emotional and psychological dimensions that extend beyond the mere absence of mental illness. Keyes (2002)[7]

introduces the concept of "flourishing," emphasizing the significance of positive mental health in the broader context of overall happiness. Building on this framework, Seligman's PERMA model (2011)[8] delineates key elements contributing to mental well-being, including Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Studies conducted by Keyes (2005)[9] indicate a positive correlation between elevated levels of mental well-being and greater life satisfaction and overall happiness. Further exploration into positive psychology interventions, as highlighted by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009)[10], reveals their promising role in enhancing mental well-being.

The research underscores the potential of interventions that target positive emotions, meaningful engagements, and social relationships to significantly contribute to an individual's mental well-being. By recognizing the multifaceted nature of mental health and its intricate interplay with overall happiness, the study advocates for a holistic approach to mental well-being interventions. This involves not only addressing the absence of mental illness but also proactively fostering positive emotional experiences and meaningful connections.

In essence, understanding and enhancing mental well-being contribute substantially to the broader goal of promoting overall happiness. The identified elements in the PERMA model provide a comprehensive framework for interventions, guiding efforts toward creating a positive and flourishing mental state. As research continues to unravel the dynamics of mental well-being, these insights become invaluable in shaping effective strategies and interventions for individuals to experience a higher quality of life and well-being.

Spiritual Well-being: Spiritual well-being involves a sense of purpose, meaning, and connection to something beyond oneself. Koenig et al. (2012)[11] explore the positive association between spirituality and both mental and physical health outcomes. Emmons (2005)[12] delves into the role of spirituality in

fostering gratitude, further contributing to overall well-being. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale, developed by Paloutzian and Ellison (1982)[13], is widely employed to measure spiritual well-being, encompassing both religious and existential dimensions. Research by Hill and Pargament (2008)[14] suggests that spiritual well-being acts as a protective factor against mental health challenges. This dimension adds a profound layer to the understanding of happiness, acknowledging that a sense of purpose and connection can significantly contribute to an individual's overall well-being.

By synthesizing the literature on these four dimensions, your research endeavors to unravel the complexities of happiness among students. The intersectionality of physical, social, mental, and spiritual dimensions provides a rich foundation for exploring interventions and policies aimed at enhancing overall happiness in educational settings. This holistic approach acknowledges the multifaceted nature of well-being and encourages a comprehensive understanding that goes beyond individual facets, fostering a more nuanced and enriched perspective on happiness.

Our inquiry is informed by a rich tapestry of previous research. Studies such as Diener and Biswas-Diener's exploration of "Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth" (2008)[15] have revealed the global significance of happiness and its multifaceted nature. Additionally, the work of Beazley (1998)[16] on the "Meaning and Measurement of Spirituality in Organizational Settings: Development of a Spirituality Assessment Scale" adds depth to our understanding of the spiritual dimension of well-being.

Furthermore, our research draws from Indian philosophical perspectives, including the concept of "The four noble duties with environmental ethics" discussed by M. Vijaya, S.M. Indira, and K. Remi Rajani[17]. Bhatt's exploration of "Social Philosophy"[18] and Swami Rangathananda's insights (citation 4) provide valuable insights into the cultural and spiritual underpinnings of well-being. The concept of Ahimsa (non-violence) in Indian

thought, as examined by Koselya Walli[19] and Kamala Jain, highlights the role of spirituality and ethics in shaping happiness. Additionally, Sukla Yajurveda's teachings offer profound insights into the ancient Indian wisdom that informs our study.

In examining the Indian philosophical perspective, M. Vijaya, S.M. Indira, and K. Remi Rajani's work on "The four noble duties with environmental ethics" illuminates the intricate relationship between ethical responsibilities and happiness. This perspective underscores the interconnectedness of one's actions and their impact on the environment, emphasizing the importance of harmonious coexistence and well-being not only for individuals but also for the broader ecosystem.

Bhatt's exploration of "Social Philosophy" delves into the ethical foundations of social relationships, shedding light on the principles that guide human interactions in the Indian context. Swami Rangathananda's insights further enrich our understanding by emphasizing the role of spirituality in fostering inner peace and well-being. These philosophical underpinnings highlight the profound impact of cultural and spiritual values on the pursuit of happiness in India.

The concept of Ahimsa (non-violence), as examined by Koselya Walli and Kamala Jain (citation 8), underscores the ethical dimensions of happiness. Ahimsa, deeply rooted in Indian philosophy, extends beyond physical harm to encompass emotional and spiritual well-being. It promotes compassion, tolerance, and non-aggression, aligning with the holistic approach to well-being embraced in India.

Additionally, the teachings of Sukla Yajurveda (citation 9) provide ancient wisdom that emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life forms and the importance of living in harmony with nature. These teachings resonate with contemporary discussions on environmental ethics and sustainability, reinforcing the idea that well-being extends beyond individual happiness to include the well-being of the entire ecosystem.

Moreover, the influence of education and income on mental health, as examined by Araya et al. (2003)[20] in their study "Education and income: which is more important for mental health?" and the impact of marital status on depressive symptoms over time, as explored by studies such as "Marital status and depressive symptoms over time: age and gender variations," underscores the multifaceted nature of well-being. These studies provide valuable insights into the external factors that can significantly influence an individual's mental and emotional state, shedding light on the complex interplay between socio-economic factors and happiness.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a cross-sectional observational study carried out in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh from 26 November 2023 to 10 December 2023. Students within the age group 18-30 were considered. Surveying young adults aged 18 to 30 in India allows a targeted exploration of their perspectives, crucial for understanding the dynamics of this demographic in the context of Indian societal, educational, and economic landscapes. Simple Random Sampling was followed in this study.

After securing consent, the Holistic Living Survey (HLS) was administered by interviewers, consisting of 148 questions. 10 questions were open-end and in rest 140 questions respondents were presented with statements, and they were instructed to quantify their responses on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely dissatisfied) to 5 (completely satisfied). This approach allowed participants to express their levels of satisfaction across various dimensions covered by the survey.

The literature review for the pilot survey focused on synthesizing existing research related to holistic well-being, lifestyle, and associated factors. A comprehensive exploration of scholarly articles, studies, and theoretical frameworks was conducted to identify key dimensions and variables pertinent to the holistic living construct. This involved an in-depth examination of literature on physical,

mental, social, and spiritual well-being to inform the development of the Holistic Living Survey (HLS). The review not only aided in constructing a robust questionnaire but also provided a theoretical foundation for understanding the interconnectedness of various life aspects. Emphasis was placed on identifying gaps in the current literature, which the HLS aimed to address. Additionally, insights from previous survey instruments and measurement tools were considered to refine the HLS items and ensure alignment with established constructs. The literature review thus played a pivotal role in shaping the conceptual framework of the survey, enhancing its relevance and validity within the context of holistic living.

As a dimension reduction process, principal axis factor analysis was done to extract and analyze factors. It was chosen since the Holistic Living Survey (HLS) comprised 106 questions, creating a need for dimensionality reduction to extract underlying patterns and structures within the data. Factor analysis serves as a powerful statistical technique capable of condensing a large set of variables into a more manageable and interpretable set of factors. This facilitates a deeper understanding of the interrelationships among the survey items and allows for the identification of latent constructs influencing holistic well-being.

The analytical process commenced with an evaluation of factorability, gauging the correlation matrix of scale questions. A criterion of inter-question correlations exceeding 0.30 was set, deeming correlations above this threshold indicative of sufficient interrelatedness to warrant factor analysis. Following this, an anti-image matrix was scrutinized to discern individual questions' contributions and detect potential multicollinearity issues. Subsequently, a rigorous exploration unfolded with a maximum likelihood exploratory factor analysis incorporating oblique rotation. Bartlett's test and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test were employed to assess the sphericity and sampling adequacy, respectively, ensuring the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. Internal consistency of the scale was measured

through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, providing insights into the reliability of the survey instrument. Additionally, the reliability assessment extended to all questions using the Intraclass Cluster Coefficient (ICC) to evaluate the tool's reproducibility. This multifaceted analysis was executed using SPSS 22, leveraging its robust capabilities to scrutinize the intricate relationships and underlying factors within the expansive dataset of the Holistic Living Survey (HLS).

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the implementation of the pilot survey using the Holistic Living Survey (HLS). Informed consent was diligently obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the survey's purpose, procedures, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Confidentiality measures were rigorously upheld, with participant identities anonymized to safeguard their privacy. The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring that participants were treated with respect and autonomy. Any sensitive or potentially distressing questions were approached with caution, and participants were provided with the option to skip any items that they found uncomfortable. A debriefing process was also implemented to address any queries or concerns that participants might have had after completing the survey. Additionally, the research design and survey instrument were scrutinized by an ethical review committee to ensure alignment with ethical principles and standards.

RESULTS

All 30 participants in this study were affiliated with the University of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, with ages ranging from 20 to 35 years. The gender distribution consisted of 38% males and 72% females. The primary focus of this research is a thorough exploration of the factors influencing happiness among students, employing our meticulously designed Holistic Living Survey tool. Notably, from Table 1 the reliability analysis yielded a robust Cronbach's

Alpha value of 0.918 for the extensive set of 140 items. According to the guidelines set forth by Mohd Salleh Abu and Zaidatun Tasir[21], a reliability coefficient exceeding 0.6 is considered satisfactory. Furthermore, the insights from Kroz et al.[22], emphasizing a Cronbach's Alpha range between 0.65 and 0.75 for questionnaires, align with the findings of this study. With the internal consistency of the scales surpassing the 0.65 threshold, the instrument utilized in this research demonstrates a commendable level of reliability.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.918	140

The utilization of factor analysis was imperative in constructing new factors influencing students' happiness through a comprehensive survey conducted among university students. The efficacy of this approach was validated through statistical assessments, such as Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy. The significant p-value ($p < 0.001$, $p = 0.000$) in Bartlett's test and a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure exceeding 0.6 (0.775) underscore the suitability of the matrix for factor analysis [23]. These results affirm the appropriateness of delving into Factor Analysis to discern the intricate factors shaping students' learning experiences among the undergraduate cohort.

This methodological choice aligns with established criteria indicating the factorability of a matrix, emphasizing the robust foundation for extracting meaningful insights. As we embark on unraveling the factors affecting students' happiness, these statistical assurances fortify the reliability and validity of our analytical approach. The subsequent exploration is poised to offer nuanced perspectives on the multifaceted dynamics influencing the well-being of university students, contributing to the broader discourse on student satisfaction and happiness.

Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the total variance explained at 15 distinct stages

concerning factors influencing students' happiness quotient. The decision to extract 15 factors was driven by the criterion of eigenvalues exceeding 1, resulting in a nuanced exploration of various dimensions. In total, eight factors accounted for a substantial 67.8% of the variance, with the primary contributors being factor 1 (10.7%) and factor 2 (9.7%).

The interpretation of factor loadings was a crucial step in understanding the intricate relationships between different variables. This interpretation was facilitated by scrutinizing the pattern matrix, a tool that allows for an insightful examination of loadings while accounting for intercorrelations among factors. This methodological approach ensures a robust and nuanced analysis, enabling a deeper understanding of how these factors interplay and contribute to the overall happiness experienced by students.

By delineating the stages and factors influencing happiness, Table 2 serves as a valuable resource for researchers and stakeholders seeking a detailed grasp of the nuanced dynamics involved. The extraction of factors and the subsequent interpretation of loadings provide a solid foundation for drawing meaningful insights from the data, contributing to the ongoing discourse on factors shaping students' well-being.

Table 2: Total variance explained

Factor	Rotation sum of squared loadings		
	Total	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative Percentage
1	11.257	10.721	10.721
2	10.224	9.737	20.458
3	10.201	9.715	30.173
4	9.511	9.058	39.231
5	9.275	8.834	48.065
6	8.483	8.079	56.144
7	6.333	6.031	62.175
8	5.967	5.683	67.858

Table 3 shows the rotated factor matrix for the questionnaire. Tabachnick and Fidell [28] stated variable with factor loadings more than 0.45 were chosen in this study because loadings equals to 0.45 is considered average, whereas loadings 0.32 is considered less good.

Trusting people, you know personally			.908						0.705
I have awareness about my aspirations.			.844						0.733
Trusting people of another religion			.794						0.664
Spirituality promotes peaceful living			.746						0.708
Spirituality creates an atmosphere of positivity			.730						0.818
Trusting people of another nationality			.726						0.838
Trusting people, you meet for first time			.724						0.612
I consider myself as worthless person							.584		0.687
Trusting people easily			.620						0.742
Involved in corruption: religious org			.609						0.711
Importance of Family	.470								0.617
I engage in Chanting Mantras				.900					0.855
Voted National level				.840					0.615
Voted local level				.827					0.771
Importance of Work				.813					0.712
Spirituality is utilizing the power of the rational mind for the benefit of the society.				.684					0.681
Reason of corruption-weak enforcement of law				.626					0.610
Active member of NGO			.461						0.873
Women are less corrupt than men				.583					0.624
Satisfaction with working opportunities	.480								0.727
Overall physical health				.535					0.747
Spirituality is the spirit of keep going and not giving up				.486					0.608
Reason of corruption-common practice of bribing				.460					0.715
Frequently occur in neighbourhood: Street violence					.862				0.790
Frequently occur in neighbourhood: Alcohol intake					.839				0.793
Time spent on Socializing					.738				0.655
Frequently occur in neighbourhood: Drug sale					.728				0.577
Interested in Politics					.640				0.810
Children of working women are responsible					.632				0.826
Feel Unsafe					.632				0.736
Impact of immigrants on development of country		.473							0.870
Importance of Politics	.413				.596			.462	0.592

Conclusion

In conclusion, our pilot study focusing on students has uncovered valuable insights into the multifaceted realm of happiness, pinpointing eight significant factors among the extensive array of 140 questions. The commendable reliability exhibited by our questionnaire underscores its robustness, establishing a firm groundwork for assessing diverse dimensions of well-being within student populations. Rigorous validation processes ensure the accuracy of the instrument in evaluating constructs related to happiness, providing a nuanced understanding of individual contentment among students. Beyond addressing the initial research questions, our findings introduce novel perspectives that contribute to the ongoing discourse on happiness within the unique context of students.

The practical implications stemming from our study hold considerable relevance for educators, counselors, and policymakers, providing valuable insights to inform targeted interventions geared towards enhancing the overall well-being of students. Recognizing the intricacies inherent in the studied constructs, this pilot investigation serves not only as a stepping stone but also as a catalyst, propelling the momentum for future, more extensive inquiries finely attuned to the nuanced dimensions of student well-being. The acknowledgment of study limitations, particularly the intricate nature of the examined constructs, positions this preliminary study as a foundational exploration paving the way for more in-depth investigations in the future. The commitment to undertaking further analyses, including longitudinal studies and a comprehensive consideration of additional demographic variables, reflects our dedication to amplifying the depth of understanding and expanding the generalizability of the findings to a broader context.

This groundbreaking study significantly advances our understanding of student well-being, underscoring its relevance and potential societal impact, particularly within educational settings. The conclusive results affirm the

pivotal role of our pilot study, positioning it as a noteworthy contribution to the comprehensive exploration of happiness among students and its determinants. As we chart our course forward, the profound insights gleaned from this pilot study lay the foundation for more targeted, nuanced, and impactful interventions aimed at enhancing the holistic well-being of students in diverse educational contexts. The implications extend beyond academic realms, permeating the broader societal fabric, where informed interventions can foster positive outcomes and contribute to the overall betterment of students' lives.

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