

## VARIABILITY OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PHENOMENON OF “HAPPINESS” IN SCIENTIFIC WORKS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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- To investigate the formation of the apparatus for measuring the phenomenon of “happiness” and to establish the correspondence between the variability of the understanding of this phenomenon and the development of the measuring basis;
- To investigate how scientists consider the phenomenon of “happiness” in comparison with other phenomena and organize information;
- To investigate the content of scientific works to compile scientific characteristics of happy people;
- To establish the direct and indirect effects of the influence of education on the feeling of happiness;
- To establish experimentally the variability of the understanding of the phenomenon of “happiness” in the experience of students of classes 1-11.

Various methods were used in the research, namely: theoretical (analysis of scientific data, arrangement and systematization of selected information, summarization of results in tables and lists of data) and empirical (surveys, questionnaires). 2,526 students of classes 1-11 of Kyiv and Kropyvnytskyi regions were involved in the experimental part of the research.

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### *Variability of definitions of the concept of “happiness”*

The analysis of scientific sources revealed, on the one hand, the multifaceted interest of scientists in the study of the phenomenon of “happiness”, and, on the other hand, the need to summarize the work of scientists on the variability of definitions.

According to the research results of Luo Lu, Jian Bin Shih [17], in the Western conception of understanding happiness, the emphasis is made on intra-personal or internal evaluation and satisfaction. Instead, the Chinese understanding of happiness focuses on interpersonal or external evaluation and satisfaction (such as being at ease with life).

In the work of E. Deci, R. Ryan [5], it is about the arrangement of the definition of the concept of “happiness” in relation to the leading ideas of two traditions, namely: hedonistic (happiness is the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative affect) and eudaemonic (happiness is a full and deep satisfaction with life).

As a result of the analysis of scientific and dictionary sources, we single out five approaches in formulating the definition of the phenomenon of “happiness”.

The first approach. Happiness is defined as a subjective state at the current moment. This approach is followed in the following definitions: “what I experience here and now” (D. Kahneman, E. Diener, N. Schwarz [14]); the feeling of deep satisfaction and boundless joy that someone feels (dictionary source [27]); feeling or state of the highest, complete satisfaction (dictionary source [15]).

The second approach. Happiness is defined as a subjective attitude to life. As an example, the following definition can be used: “happiness is the subjective enjoyment of life” (R. Veenhoven [30]); the state of complete satisfaction with life (dictionary source [32]).

The third approach. Happiness is defined as a measure of social progress. This approach is evident in the following definitions: happiness is the goal of state policy and a reliable measure for evaluating progress in society (R. Veenhoven [30]); happiness is a measure for establishing a holistic approach to development (United Nations [22]).

The fourth approach. Happiness is defined as the result of achieving the desired. An example can be the following definition: happiness is the realization of a dream or the

Abstract: The article presents the theoretical and experimental results of research into the phenomenon of “happiness”. As a result of the analysis of scientific sources, five approaches were distinguished in revealing its essence (happiness as a subjective state at the current moment (I approach); happiness as a subjective attitude to life (II approach); happiness as a measure of social progress (III approach); happiness as a result of achieving the desired (IV approach); happiness as a way of achieving the desired result (V approach)). The apparatus for measuring the phenomenon of happiness as a subjective state at the current moment has been established. We found out the direct and indirect effects of the influence of education on the feeling of happiness. Students of classes 1-11 of Kyiv and Kirovohrad regions were involved in the experimental part of the study. According to the results of experiment, it was revealed that student experience is characterized by variability, that is, the understanding of happiness as a subjective state at the current moment, happiness as a subjective attitude to life, happiness as the result of achieving the desired, and happiness as a way of achieving the desired result.

Keywords: happiness; students of classes 1-11; measurement of happiness; effects of education on the feeling of happiness.

### 1 Introduction

First of all, the theory of relativity of happiness testifies to the complexity of the “happiness” phenomenon. According to R. Veenhoven [30], this theory is based on three postulates:

- Happiness results from comparison,
- Standards of comparison adjust,
- Standards of comparison are arbitrary constructs.

In the scientific world, interest in happiness has only intensified over the past fifty years. The concepts of “overall happiness” and “prosperity” arose. A huge amount of research has appeared on happiness and its analogues - various types of well-being and life satisfaction. At the same time, happiness is a dynamic formation and a universal term. In sociopsychological studies, happiness often acts as an analogue of subjective well-being or its hedonic component.

Despite the wide range of uses of the definition of happiness, there is currently no generally accepted definition of happiness. In economics, sociology, and psychology, happiness is often used as an analogue or substitute for such concepts as well-being, subjective well-being, and life satisfaction. Evidently, there is an urgent need to reveal the sociocultural content of the phenomenon of happiness, the conditions for its implementation and the significance of its study as a factor in increasing the social resources of the individual and society.

### 2 Method

To research the variability of the understanding of the phenomenon of “happiness” in scientific works and student experience, the following tasks were defined:

- To analyze the definitions of the concept of “happiness” given in scientific works, and single out the approaches that reflect the scientific understanding of the essence of this phenomenon;

achievement of a goal (J. Brailovskaia, M. Lin, S. Scholten [2]); achievement (dictionary source) [27].

The fifth approach. Happiness is defined as a way to achieve a desired result. This approach is obvious in the following definitions: "happiness" is a favorable coincidence of circumstances, success (dictionary source [15]); success, luck, fate (dictionary source [32]).

#### ***The formation of the apparatus for measuring the phenomenon of "happiness"***

The formation of the apparatus for measuring the phenomenon of "happiness" occurs constantly:

1985 – publication of a scale to measure global life satisfaction, called the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener E., Emmons R. A., Larsen R. J., Griffin S. [6]).

1988 – publication of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). Chart structure: two mood scales containing 10 items each. For answers to each item, a five-point Likert scale is used (1 - very little or no influence at all, 5 - the highest manifestation of influence) (D. Watson, L. Clark, A. Tellegen [34]).

1994 - publication of the expanded form of the schedule of positive and negative effects (PANAS-X). The previous version (PANAS) was supplemented with additional affect scales (D. Watson, L.A. Clark (University of Iowa) [33]).

1999 – 1) publication of the subjective happiness scale. The scale is constructed using absolute ratings, which are descriptions of happy and unhappy people. The respondent needs to identify himself with one of the given descriptions (S. Lyubomirsky, H.S. Lepper [19]); 2) publication of a day reconstruction method (DRM) to obtain results that explain what a person feels. DRM or Day Reconstruction Method is a fairly successful method of reconstructing experiences throughout the day. It gives results similar to those of "What I experience and is easier to do" (D. Kahneman, E. Diener, N. Schwarz [14]).

2002 - publication of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire to obtain a snapshot of the respondent's current level of happiness. The happiness questionnaire contains a number of statements about happiness. The respondent correlates each statement with his condition and chooses a certain mark of the scale. The marks of the scale are as follows: 1 – do not agree at all; 2 – moderately disagree; 3 - slightly disagree; 4 – slightly agree; 5 – moderately agree; 6 – fully agree (P. Hills, M. Argyle [13]).

2012 – publication of the first Report on World Happiness. Cantrell's ladder method was used to prepare reporting materials and determine the rating of national happiness. Respondents evaluated their current life [12]. To do this, they imagined a staircase with the best opportunity for them equal to 10 and the worst, which corresponds to zero, and chose the staircase on which they imagined themselves.

The phenomenon of "happiness" is first explored as part of overall life satisfaction and as an indicator of positive and negative influences. Since the end of the 20th century, it has been studied as an independent phenomenon. This was facilitated by the adoption by the UN General Assembly of Resolution 65/309 "Happiness: Towards a Holistic Definition of Development" (2011). The phenomenon of happiness is beginning to be studied at the level of individual states, and the obtained research data are used to compile a rating of national happiness.

The research of the phenomenon of "happiness", which was carried out in the context of the events of the last three years (the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, world inflation and a number of local and global climatic emergencies), gained special value, since the research was carried out using life assessments and emotions that accompanied development in crisis situations. The results of the study helped establish how much better life was where trust, goodwill, and supportive social ties continued to prevail [12].

An interesting report on happiness was published in 2023 [12]. For the sixth year in a row, Finland ranked first, followed by Denmark, Iceland, Israel, and the Netherlands. In the top 10 rankings, Israel moved up 5 spots, while Switzerland dropped 4 spots. Lithuania was the only new country in the top twenty. Despite the scale of suffering and destruction in Ukraine, life estimates in September 2022 remained higher than after the 2014 annexation, helped by a much stronger sense of common purpose, benevolence, and trust in the Ukrainian leadership [12].

#### ***The phenomenon of "happiness" in comparison with other phenomena***

The analysis of scientific sources revealed that in the results of research, scientists compare the phenomenon of "happiness" with other phenomena, in particular:

##### **1. Happiness compared with meaning, worry, stress, and anxiety.**

According to the research results of R. Baumeister, K. Vohs, J. Aaker, E. Garbinsky [1], happiness is mostly present-oriented, whereas meaningfulness involves integrating past, present, and future. Higher levels of worry, stress, and anxiety were linked to higher meaningfulness but lower happiness. Concerns about personal identity and self-expression contributed to meaningfulness but not happiness.

##### **2. Consideration of happiness in comparison with needs.**

According to the research results of R. Veenhoven [30], happiness draws on gratification of universal needs, rather than on meeting culturally relative wants. The satisfaction of needs depends both on the viability of society and on the viability of individuals [21]. Need gratification depends both on the livability of society and the life-ability of individuals [21] The scientist analyzes happiness in the context of satisfying basic biopsychological needs.

The overall evaluation of life depends also on how one feels affectively and how hedonic level of affect draws on its turn on the gratification of basic bio-psychological needs. Contrary to acquired 'standards' of comparison, these innate 'needs' do not adjust to any and all conditions: they mark in fact the limits of human adaptability. To the extent that it depends on need-gratification, happiness is not relative [30].

R. Baumeister, K. Vohs, J. Aaker, E. Garbinsky [1] based on the results of the study formulated the conclusion that the satisfaction of one's own needs and desires increased happiness.

According to the results of the research by T. Miyer, L. Holodiuk, S. Omelchuk, V. Savosh, H. Bondarenko, L. Romanenko, K. Romanenko [21], happiness is associated with the priority of needs in different age, in particular, with the need to learn something new (from 4 to 8 years old, from 19 to 35 years old, and after 60 years old) and the need for communication (from 8 to 13 years old, from 13 to 19 years old and from 35 to 60 years old).

##### **3. Consideration of happiness in comparison with health.**

R. Veenhoven [31] notes that happiness signals that we are functioning well. Good mental and physical health go hand in hand with happiness.

Happy people live longer and healthier lives, have more rewarding and stable relationships, are more productive, more resilient to negative life events, donate more to charity, and are more likely to help others (Diener et al. [7-9]).

##### **4. Consideration of happiness in comparison with activity.**

According to R. Veenhoven [30], happiness goes well with good deeds. Happy people have better relationships with other people, they do more volunteer work, they are more interested in other people and their problems.

### 5. Consideration of happiness in comparison with success.

According to S. Lyubomirsky, L. King, E. Diener [18], the connection between happiness and success exists not only because success makes people happy, but also because positive influence generates success. According to the findings of the scientists, happiness is associated with and precedes numerous successful outcomes, as well as behaviors consistent with success.

### 6. Consideration of happiness in comparison with social interaction.

Very happy people were sociable and had stronger romantic and other social relationships than less happy groups. They were more extroverted, nicer and less neurotic. Good social relations were necessary for happiness. Members of the happiest group experienced positive but not ecstatic feelings most of the time, and they sometimes reported low moods. This suggests that very happy people have a functioning emotional system that can adequately respond to life events (E. Diener, M. Seligman [8]).

According to the results of the study, a positive correlation of happiness is observed:

- With life, health, positive emotions (L. Lu, J. B. Shih [17]);
- With social capital, which includes informal social interaction, general social interaction, institutional trust. A. Rodríguez-Pose, V. von Berlepsch [23]. A. Rodríguez-Pose, V. von Berlepsch [23] established that there is a significant difference in how social capital interacts with happiness in different regions of Europe, with the connection being at its weakest in the Nordic countries.
- With the surrounding natural environment, in particular the characteristics of residential areas, which include access to open, natural spaces that facilitate social interaction (Somarriba Arechavala, N., Zarzosa Espina, P., López Pastor, A.T. [25]).
- With the social environment, in particular with social interaction (L. Lu, J. B. Shih [17]); with the physical environment of the neighborhood (Somarriba Arechavala, N., Zarzosa Espina, P. & López Pastor, A.T. [25]; with good relations in the neighborhood (H. Taniguchi, D.A. Potter [29]); with neighborhood community (D. Mcmillan [20]; with trust in one's family and living near a community that, according to people, can be trusted (K. Leyden, A. Goldberg, P. Michelbach [16]); with social networks in which people support each other (M. Gür, D. Murat, F. Ş. Sezer [11]).
- With the place of residence - satisfaction with the place of residence, in particular, with the residential area and residential complex, has a positive effect on happiness (M. Gür, D. Murat, F. Ş. Sezer [11]).
- With work, namely: people with stable work are happier compared to people with unstable work or unemployed (K. Leyden, A. Goldberg, P. Michelbach [16]).
- With psychological freedom. According to G. Brulé, R. Veenhoven [3], psychological freedom is most strongly related to happiness in rich nations. The Finns are happier than the French because they dare more to be free.

### *Scientific characteristics of happy people*

Different scientific publications give different characteristics of happy people, namely:

- Live and work with pleasure, do what they love, and happily devote time to family and children; self-confident, because they have a reliable support under their confidence; are ready to overcome obstacles that arise on the path of life; they enjoy spending a lot of time with family and friends, value their relationships with loved ones; easily give thanks for what they have; they are the first to offer their help to colleagues and strangers; they are optimistic about the future; enjoy life and today; are constantly engaged in sports; they consistently achieve their goals (O. Surzhenko) [28].

- They have a positive temperament, are extroverted, tend to see things on the bright side, have better social relationships, can better cope with bad events, have the necessary resources for personal progress and achieving their goals (E. Diner) [7].
- Happy people achieve success in many areas of life, including marriage, friendships, income, work productivity, and health (V. Sophie C. Sara T Jellen [26]).

### *Direct and indirect effects of education on happiness*

In the research of J. Cuñado, F. P. Gracia [4], the presence of two effects of education on happiness was established: 1) a direct effect from the acquisition of knowledge (the appearance of the effects of "self-confidence" and "high self-esteem") and indirect (the effect of education on happiness through income and employment status (people with a higher level of education have a higher level of income and a higher probability of being employed)

The indirect influence of education on happiness through the satisfaction of cognitive needs, providing the basis for career growth (achievement at work) is traced in the results of the research by Luo Lu, Jian Bin Shih [17]. Scientists have established that the main sources of happiness are: a) gratification of need for respect; b) harmony of interpersonal relationships; c) satisfaction of material needs; d) achievement at work; e) being at ease with life; f) taking pleasure at others' expense; g) sense of self-control and self-actualization; h) pleasure and positive affect; i) health.

A research by M. Salinas-Jiménez, J. Artés, J. Salinas-Jiménez [24] established the direct and indirect effects of education on women's happiness and the indirect effects of education on men's happiness through professional status, job improvement, and opportunities for employment.

N. Somarriba Arechavala, P. Zarzosa Espina, A.T. López Pastor [25] singled out the indirect effect of education on happiness, which relates to better adaptation to changes and increasing the level of aspirations.

O. Surzhenko [28] characterizes the child's experience of happiness in the family in the context of the direct influence of family upbringing. According to the generalizations of the scientist, the following factors contribute to the child's experience of happiness in the family: parents' understanding of the influence of the surrounding world on the child; education without the use of psychological and physical violence; waiver of punishments; a favorable psychological climate in the family and the right approach to conflict resolution; sequence of upbringing, which is achieved by setting boundaries; democratic education; the development of a child's positive thinking, a sense of optimism, the formation of gratitude; avoiding social comparison and envy; development of social contacts; promoting the acquisition of moral values by the child; development of endurance based on the analysis of what is happening and managing one's emotions; formation of the ability to forgive and live here and now; involvement of the child in family traditions and rituals.

The experimental part of the study was aimed at studying the students' understanding of the phenomenon of "happiness" and identifying the approaches in formulating the definitions of the phenomenon of "happiness" that are preferred by this category of respondents. These are the following approaches: happiness as a subjective state at the current moment; happiness as a subjective attitude to life; happiness as a measure of social progress; happiness as a result of achieving the desired; happiness as a way to achieve the desired result.

During 2022-2023, 2,526 students of classes 1-11 from the city of Kyiv, Kyiv and Kropyvnytskyi regions took part in the pedagogical experiment.

Table 1 shows the keywords in the reasoning of students of grades 1-11 about what the word “happiness” means to them personally.

Table 1: Keywords in the reasoning of students of classes 1-11 about happiness

Keywords of students' reasoning	Classes										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
peace											
good											
family											
positive emotions											
dream come true											
good mood											
helping people											
success											
luck											
result in your favorite business											
participation in interesting work											
nice communication											
achieving the goal											

In Table 2, we have entered the keywords of the opinions of students in classes 1-11 about what they feel when they are happy.

Table 2: Keywords of reasoning of students of classes 1-11 about what they feel when they are happy

Keywords of students' reasoning	Classes										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
joy											
liveliness											
warm											
satisfaction from achievements											
tranquility											
success											
luck											
an opportunity that can be used											

Analysis of the data in Tables 1 and 2 makes it possible to formulate the following conclusions:

1. Happiness as a subjective state at the current moment is characteristic of the reasoning of students of classes 1-11 and is perceived by them as joy.
2. Happiness as a subjective attitude to life is observed in relation to students of classes 3-11. This is the satisfaction of achievements (classes 3-11).
3. Happiness as a measure of social progress is not characteristic of the reasoning of students in classes 1-11. However, our attention was drawn to the inner desire of students of classes 1-11 to live in peace.
4. Happiness as a result of achieving the desired is characteristic of the reasoning of students of grades 1-11. It is a dream come true (classes 1-11); goal achievement (11th class).
5. Happiness as a way to achieve the desired result. This is success, luck (classes 5-11), an opportunity that can be used (11th class).

**4 Conclusions**

1. Analysis of the variability of the definitions of the concept of “happiness” contributed to the identification of five approaches in revealing its essence: happiness as a subjective state at the current moment; happiness as a subjective attitude to life; happiness as a measure of social progress; happiness as a result of achieving the desired; happiness as a way to achieve the desired result.

2. The analysis of the results of the research of the apparatus for measuring the phenomenon of happiness made it possible to establish the correspondence between the approaches to revealing the essence of the concept of “happiness” and the measuring apparatus:

- Happiness as a subjective state at the current moment - the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) (D. Watson, L. Clark, A. Tellegen [34]; the schedule of positive and negative effects (PANAS-X) (D. Watson, A. Lee Clark [33]); the subjective happiness scale (S. Lyubomirsky, H.S. Lepper [19]); the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (P. Hills, M. Argyle [13]).
- Happiness as a subjective attitude to life - the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener E., Emmons R. A., Larsen R. J., Griffin S. [10]);
- Happiness as a measure of social progress (Report on World Happiness).

**3. Happiness in comparison**

- With significance, concern, stress, and anxiety (R. Baumeister, K. Vohs, J. Aaker, E. Garbinsky [1]);
- With needs (R. Veenhoven [30]; R. Baumeister, K. Vohs, J. Aaker, E. Garbinsky [1]; T. Miyer, L. Holodiuk, S. Omelchuk, V. Savosh, H. Bondarenko, L. Romanenko, K. Romanenko [21]);
- With health (R. Veenhoven [31]; Diener et al. [7-10]);
- With activity (R. Veenhoven [30]);
- With success (S. Lyubomirsky, L. King, E. Diener [18]);
- With social interaction (E. Diener, M. Seligman [8]).

According to the results of the study, a positive correlation of happiness was established:

- With quality of life, health, positive emotions (L. Lu, J. B. Shih [17]).
- With social capital, including informal social interaction, general social interaction, and institutional trust (A. Rodríguez-Pose, V. von Berlepsch [23]).
- With the surrounding natural environment that promotes social interaction (Somarrriba Arechavala, N., Zarzosa Espina, P., López Pastor, A.T. [25]).
- With the social environment, in particular social interaction (L. Lu, J. B. Shih [17]); with the physical environment of the neighborhood (Somarrriba Arechavala, N., Zarzosa Espina, P. & López Pastor, A.T. [25]); with good relations in the residential area (H. Taniguchi, D.A. Potter [29]); with the neighborhood community (D. Mcmillan [20]); with trust in one's family and living near a community that people believe can be trusted (K. Leyden, A. Goldberg, P. Michelbach [16]); with a social network in which people support each other (M. Gür, D. Murat, F. Ş. Sezer [11]).
- With work (K. Leyden, A. Goldberg, P. Michelbach [16]).
- With psychological freedom (G. Brulé, R. Veenhoven [3]).

Data on the characteristics of happy people are summarized, as well as on the influence of education on the feeling of happiness, characterized in direct and indirect effects.

During the experimental work, it was established:

- For students of classes 1-11, happiness as a subjective state at the current moment is correlated with joy; happiness as a result of achieving the desired is explained as the implementation of a dream; happiness as a measure of social progress is manifested in a conscious desire to live in peace.
- For students of classes 3-11, happiness as a subjective attitude to life is associated with receiving satisfaction from one's achievements.
- For students of the 11th class, happiness as a result of achieving the desired is correlated with the achievement of the goal.
- For students of classes 5-11, happiness as a way of achieving the desired result is associated with success and luck.

- For students of the 11th class, happiness as a way of achieving the desired result is correlated with an opportunity that can be used.

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#### Primary Paper Section: A

#### Secondary Paper Section: AM, AN