



Effect of Happiness on Life Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Well-Being

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Abstract

Background: Well-being specifically, the fundamental components of subjective well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction provide information about how a person evaluates their quality of life. A common perception of a healthy and happy human being is influenced by knowledge of well-being as a mediator, which deepens awareness of how and by what process happiness leads to an increase in life satisfaction.

Objective: The study aims to investigate the direct and indirect effect of happiness on life satisfaction through well-being as a mediator.

Material and Method: The study recruited 180 research participants who were selected from various districts of Haryana (India). The data was collected from the selected sample with the help of self-reported measures. The collected data was statistically analyzed with the help of PROCESS macro using SPSS.

Results and Discussion: Happiness is found to be a significant predictor of well-being ($\beta=0.3061$) and life satisfaction ($\beta=0.2176$). Well-being also emerged as an important predictor of life satisfaction ($\beta=0.7778$). The direct effect ($\beta=0.2176$) of happiness on life satisfaction and the indirect impact ($\beta=0.2381$) through the mediator of well-being are found to be significant. So, well-being mediates the relationship between happiness and life satisfaction.

Conclusion: The findings conclude that well-being is a significant mediator of the relationship between happiness and life satisfaction. This study has broad theoretical relevance and may be helpful to educators, legislators, and mental health practitioners.

Keywords: Happiness, life satisfaction, well-being, mediator



Introduction

Well-being is one of the oldest and most fundamental notions in human pursuit, and it has been a focus of positive psychology research. A person's personal experience determines whether they are happy or satisfied (Lyubomirsky, 2001). Positive psychology research has demonstrated that happiness leads to a variety of positive life outcomes, including physical well-being, social relationships, and productivity (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Life satisfaction has been identified as one of the most essential constructs for assessing quality of life (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Satisfaction with life is a worldwide assessment of the quality of an individual's life across personal, social, and professional dimensions (Pavot & Iener 1993). Because life satisfaction has such a significant impact on people's mental health (Devi & Singh, 2024) and overall quality of life, determining its causes has piqued researchers' curiosity

Research in the well-being area has revealed that well-being is always an intervening variable in various psychological and behavioral outcomes (Diener et al., 2017). Positive well-being relates to the quality of daily life and is characterized as psychological well-being, which includes characteristics such as autonomy, mastery, relationships, purpose, growth, and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989). In some ways, happiness, well-being, and life satisfaction are interconnected (Veenhoven, 2011; Ruggeri et al., 2020) dynamic constructions that still require detailed explanations of their reciprocal relationships and the channel by which the happiness construct influences the life satisfaction construct.

Nonetheless, there is a need to understand the relationship between these variables because considerable data is demonstrating the importance of happiness and life satisfaction in improving quality of life. Happiness is well recognized as an antecedent of life satisfaction, but research has not thoroughly investigated the mediating function of psychological well-being across cultures and circumstances (Diener et al., 2018). Numerous psychological difficulties will arise in the coming decade as the world gets more sophisticated and rapidly changing. This paper explains why understanding how well-being performance plays a mediating role between happiness and life satisfaction is critical for designing better interventions that promote good mental health.

However, cross-sectional research on happiness and life satisfaction is predominantly undertaken in WE (Worldwide Effect) contexts, implying a genuine danger of cultural bias in



generalizations (Oishi & Diener, 2014). Sociocultural, economic, and ecological statuses may all have an impact on people's happiness and life satisfaction levels. As a result, research on this link across varied groups is required to develop cultural theories and practices in psychology. Furthermore, past work has popularized the study of subjective well-being and psychological well-being as wholly separate entities, with only a few studies theorizing both in order to uncover all of their mediation functions (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

While there has been a lot of research into the direct relationship between happiness and life satisfaction, the moderating impact of psychological well-being has received less attention. The majority of the preceding research focuses solely on a single construct without considering the interaction of various variables within a single framework. Furthermore, most research studies lack a grasp of the numerous dimensions of well-being and how they affect life satisfaction (Huppert & So, 2013). As a result, the purpose of this study is to establish the function of psychological well-being as the relationship between happiness and life satisfaction by examining the data in order to gain more profound insights into the elements that influence life satisfaction. Filling this study gap will contribute to the advancement of positive psychology literature by offering information on what improves life satisfaction through a focus on happiness and well-being.

Objectives:

1. To study the impact of happiness on well-being.
2. To study the impact of happiness on life satisfaction
3. To study the impact of well-being on life satisfaction
4. To study whether well-being mediates the effect of happiness on life satisfaction

Hypotheses:

1. Happiness will significantly predict well-being.
2. Happiness will significantly predict life satisfaction
3. Well-being will significantly predict life satisfaction
4. Well-being will significantly mediate the effect of happiness on life satisfaction

Material and Methods:



Sample: The sample of the present study comprises 180 research participants who were selected from various districts of Haryana (India). Ensuring voluntary participation following exclusion and inclusion criteria were used for the selection of the sample.

Inclusion criteria:

- Age group 18-25 years.
- Can read/write Hindi/English

Exclusion criteria:

- Participants having any severe psychiatric ailment
- Cannot read/write Hindi/English
- Receiving other psychological interventions

Ethical Consideration: The present study aims to explore the direct as well as the indirect effects of happiness on life satisfaction through well-being as a mediator. Before collecting the necessary information from selected participants, the purpose of the research was debriefed to them and then the following consent form was given to them:

“I am going to ask you some personal questions that some of the people find difficult to answer. Your answers will be kept completely confidential, your name, will not be disclosed to anyone, and will never be used in connection with any of the information you tell me. Based on this you might be asked to be selected for the research which we are going to conduct. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable with, and you may withdraw from this research at any time you want to. We would greatly appreciate your help in contributing to this research. Would you be willing to participate?”

Voluntary participation was ensured and if the respondents provide consent, only then they will be allowed to be a part of this research.

Assessments:

Self-reported measures were used to collect the data from the sample. *WHO Well-Being Index* (WHO, 1998) comprises 5 items that were used to evaluate the level of general well-being among the participants. For assessing the level of happiness, *The Subjective Happiness Scale* (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) comprises 4 items was used. *Satisfaction with life Scale* (Diener



et al., 1985) comprises 5 items used to evaluate the level of life satisfaction of the subjects. All the scales are valid and possess good internal consistency.

Statistical Analysis: The effect size value for adequate sample size was calculated using ‘G*Power’ software. The obtained data was statistically analyzed with the help of (model-4) PROCESS macro software by Hayes (Hayes, 2013; 2017) and SPSS-26 (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) using descriptive analysis and regression analysis (specifically mediation analysis). The mediation analysis was used to examine whether well-being mediates the relationship between happiness and life satisfaction.

Results: The effect size value for adequate sample size was calculated using a priori power analysis by using ‘G*Power’ software. At the effect size (f^2) of 0.15, a significant value of $p < 0.05$, and considering three as the number of predictors, the minimum adequate sample size was calculated which was found to be ‘119’. As our sample size of 180 is greater than the value so, our sample size is sufficient to conduct the research (Cohen, 2013; Gatsonis & Sampson, 1989). The study employed Model 4 of the PROCESS macro to examine the mediating role of well-being in the relationship between happiness and life satisfaction. A sample size of 180 participants was analyzed. Table 1 reveals the descriptive analyses for all the variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Analyses

Variable	Mean	SE	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Happiness	17.90	.286	3.842	-.537	-.127
Well-Being	15.32	.371	4.980	-.442	-.314
Life-Satisfaction	23.94	.460	6.175	-.697	-.025

Descriptive analyses depict that the mean score of the participants on the variable of happiness is 17.90 (SE=0.286, SD=3.842), on well-being is 15.32 (SE=0.371, SD=4.980), and on life satisfaction is 23.94 (SE=0.460, SD=6.175). Table 2 depicts the model summary for well-being as the outcome variable.

Table 2: Model Summary for Well-Being as Dependent Variable (N = 180)

Predictor	β	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	9.8380	1.7281	5.6930	.0000	6.4278	13.2482
Happiness	0.3061	.0944	3.2422	.0014	.1198	.4924



Note: 'Model Statistics: $R = .2361$, $R^2 = 0.0558$, $F(1, 178) = 10.5116$, $p < .014$ '

The overall model for the regression analysis for well-being as the outcome variable was found to be significant ($F=10.5116$, $p<.05$). The outcomes of the study depict that happiness ($SE=0.944$, $p<.001$) is a significant predictor of well-being. The beta value ($\beta=.3061$) indicates that one unit change in the level of happiness brings a change of 0.3061 units in the level of well-being. So, our first hypothesis states that '*Happiness will significantly predict well-being*' is accepted. Table 3 depicts the model summary for life satisfaction as the outcome variable.

Table 3: Model Summary for Life Satisfaction as Dependent Variable (N = 180)

Predictor	β	SE	T	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	8.1311	1.7798	4.5684	0.000	4.6186	11.6435
Happiness	0.2176	0.0920	2.3643	0.019	0.0360	0.3992
Well-Being	0.7778	0.0710	10.9541	0.000	0.6377	0.9179

Note: 'Model Statistics: $R = .6723$, $R^2 = 0.4519$, $F(2, 177) = 72.9754$, $p < .001$ '

The overall model for the regression analysis for life satisfaction as the outcome variable was found to be significant ($F=72.9754$, $p<.014$). The outcomes of the study depict that happiness ($SE=0.0920$, $p<.05$) is a significant predictor of life satisfaction. The beta value ($\beta=.2176$) indicates that one unit change in the level of happiness brings a change of .2176 unit in the level of life satisfaction. So, our second hypothesis states that '*Happiness will significantly predict life satisfaction*' is also accepted.

Further, well-being ($SE=0.0710$, $p<.001$) is a significant predictor of life satisfaction. The beta value ($\beta=.7778$) indicates that one unit change in the level of well-being brings a change of 0.7778 unit in the level of life satisfaction. So, our third hypothesis states that '*Well-being will significantly predict life satisfaction*' is accepted. Table 4 represents the direct and indirect effect of happiness on life satisfaction through well-being as a mediator.

Table 4: Direct and Indirect Effect

Effect	Effect Size	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Direct	0.2176	0.0920	2.3643	0.019	0.0360	0.3992
Indirect	0.2381	0.0983		0.001	0.0536	0.4401



The direct effect of happiness on life satisfaction was found to be significant ($SE=0.0920$, $p<.05$) with an effect size of 0.2176. The indirect effect of happiness on life satisfaction through well-being is also found to be significant ($SE=0.0983$, $p<0.001$) with an effect size of 0.2381, also the effect size of the indirect pathway is greater than the direct pathway. As, both direct as well as indirect pathways are significant, it can be stated that well-being is a partial mediator for the relationship between happiness and life satisfaction. So, our last hypothesis states that '*Well-being will significantly mediate the effect of happiness on life satisfaction*' is also accepted.

Discussion

The observations made in the current study give tangible information about happiness, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction. The findings of the study depicted that happiness significantly predicts well-being which further significantly predicts life satisfaction. It was also revealed in the study that happiness has the potential to predict independently. Further, through the path to well-being, it can predict life satisfaction more effectively. The findings of our research are in line with the present literature to date. As found in prior studies, self, and overall positive affectivity scores collectively referred to as happiness push forward the concept of subjective well-being (Diener & Seligman, 2002). The findings also support the notion that again the variable of psychological well-being serves us as a mediator variable which sheds light on the nature and channels that happiness impacts life satisfaction. This tends to the theoretical model by Ryff (1989) that facilitates existence regarding the various dimensions of well-being.

Among the major findings of this research is that psychological well-being acts as a mediator. The results suggest the idea that happiness alone improves life satisfaction when combined with well-being. Achieving sustainable happiness requires active engagement in the sort of activities that deepen and enhance well-being, as the sustainable happiness model predicts (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2021).

Cultural context also contributes to the character of relations between happiness and life satisfaction (Peterson et al., 2005; Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2023). Existing research based on samples from worldwide effects has often failed to provide a clear understanding of the cultural factors that shape these constructs in diverse populations of the world (Oishi & Diener, 2014). This study fills this gap by focusing on the fit within a particular cultural context and assists in



enhancing overall worldwide wellness. Future research should aim to broaden these studies to improve the external validity of the data collected. From these findings, practitioners and policymakers are in a good position to develop programs that improve happiness they also build psychological resources that support the well-being of the people (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Conclusion and Implications:

As with the previous investigations, this research points to the importance of psychological elements, as a mediator of happiness and life satisfaction the various paths to improve quality of life are significant in this study. The study implies that managing psychological health has a further potential to enhance the extent to which happiness can enhance life satisfaction and promote sustainable mental health.

The theoretical relevance of this study is broad and could prove useful to mental health professionals, educators as well as policymakers. Interventions such as Mindfulness interventions Positive psychology exercises and strength-based interventions can improve life satisfaction immensely (Gunjan & Singh, 2024). Further, advanced cultural frameworks need to be adopted to underpin the application of well-being promotion initiatives to the international community.

Limitations and Future Directions:

The following limitations are recognized even though many advancements are offered by this study. First, the cross-sectional design inevitably contributes to weak causal relationships between the variables investigated. Studies in the future should adopt longitudinal studies in which subjects' happiness, well-being, and life satisfaction could be measured at different time intervals. Second, the subject of the study mostly employs psychological well-being while excluding the other well-being domains; for example, social well-being and physical well-being. Future research can then build on these aspects to add up to an expanded model. Finally, greater use of qualitative research could provide additional information about personal subjective states of happiness and well-being, which should augment the large-scale measurement results and provide a more comprehensive picture of the said constructs.

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Informed Consent: The research participants were made aware of the procedure, process, and benefits of the study. Informed consent for the same was obtained from all the research participants.



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