

MEASURES OF HAPPINESS AMONG MANILA RESIDENTS

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Three types of measure of individual happiness were used in an early-1972 survey of 941 adults in Metro Manila. The measures were consistent, but reflected some distinction between personal emotional satisfactions and the attainment of societally defined success goals. Somewhat different correlates of happiness were identified for males and females.

Individual happiness or contentment is ultimately a subjective, personal phenomenon, a composite of a large number of separate experiences and feelings, but not consistently reducible to any one of them. Happiness cannot simply be equated with the individual's welfare as determined from objective indices, such as health, income, and social status, since people consider different standards of welfare adequate, and react with differing degrees of emotion to variations in their levels of living. Nevertheless happiness is not entirely a matter of idiosyncratic desires, since collective and reference-group ideas of what constitutes happiness strongly pattern the individual's emotional appreciation of his own situation.

Various attempts have been made to measure individual happiness. The possibility of measurement is implied in the way people speak of being more or less happy, very happy at particular times and quite unhappy at others. Bradburn and Caplovitz, in a survey of four small towns in Illinois, relied on the individual's self-assessment of his own contentment, arguing that because of its face validity, directness, and ease of use it gives "the respondents' best estimate of his present over-all sense of well-being, or distress" (1965: 7). Such a measure is subjective, requiring the individual's personal evaluation; aggregative, requiring a composite judgment; and ipsative, taking into account individual differences in personal evaluations.

Bradburn and Caplovitz determined that happiness is based on a proper balance between positive and negative feelings. Anxiety, marital tension, and job dissatisfaction related to developing negative feelings, while social interaction and active participation in the environment related to developing positive feelings. Negative and positive feelings were not opposite ends of one dimension: each set varied independently of the other. Each set also contributed independently of the other set to happiness.

A second study by Davitz (1969) is more precise on the nature of happiness as a feeling state. Davitz attempted to construct a dictionary of the meanings of different emotions, and to identify rationally ordered clusters of more or less homogeneous emotions. Fifty subjects chose items from a checklist to describe 50 different emotional experiences, including happiness. The items most often associated with happiness were these:

there is an inner warm glow, a radiant sensation
I feel like smiling
there is a sense of being more alive
I am excited in a calm way
there is a sense of well-being
a sense of harmony and peace within
everything is going right for me
I'm optimistic and cheerful
the world seems basically good and beautiful
men are essentially kind
life is worth living
there is a renewed appreciation of life.

When these items were cluster-analyzed across

all the emotions, Davitz found three clusters predominant in the definition of happiness: activation (a sense of vitality), comfort (a sense of well-being), and enhancement (a sense of sureness).

A third important study is Cantril's (1965) delineation of people's aspirations and fears in 13 different nations. Cantril developed a "self-anchoring striving scale" to measure happiness, a ladder with 11 steps (0-10), where the top step represents "the best possible life for you" and the bottom represents "the worst possible life." Respondents are asked to describe their hopes for the future and their worries for the future, and then to place themselves on the ladder in terms of their present life, their life five years in the past, and their expectations for five years in the future. Satisfaction with one's life was highest in more developed countries, and within each country increased reliably with education, income, and higher-status occupations. Cantril's approach and the other two approaches will be utilized in assessing personal happiness in Greater Manila, and evaluated in terms of their usefulness.

Method

The sample was 941 adults (21 years or over) from Metro Manila, defined narrowly to cover the City of Manila and seven surrounding cities or towns, interviewed between January and April, 1972. Thirty-five Census Enumeration Districts were chosen at random, and roughly 30 respondents were interviewed in most districts.¹ Most interviews were conducted in Tagalog.

The measures of happiness included in the survey questionnaire were all structured. Parallel to Bradburn and Caplovitz, respondents were asked: "Considering everything that has happened to you recently, how would you say things are with you - would you say you're very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?" This measure will be referred to as reported happiness. Cantril's ladder was the second measure, for one's life at the present, five years in the past, and five years in the future. The final measure was a set of 12 feelings that respondents could admit to having experienced

"never, once, several times, or often" during the week before the interview. The feelings were mostly selected from Bradburn and Caplovitz and Davitz.

Results

Levels of happiness

Over half the respondents (56 percent) describe themselves as "pretty happy." Those who are "very happy" are a small group at 15 percent, while those who are "not so happy" are twice as many at 30 percent.² For comparison, Gurin, Veroff, and Feld (1960), using the same categories, reported that 10 percent of a national American sample of small-town residents was "not too happy" and Bradburn and Caplovitz (1965) reported 17 percent in this category in a sampled weighted with respondents from economically depressed areas. Respondents were also asked if they were happier five years ago. In the judgment of 40 percent they were, 33 percent estimated the situation to be about the same, and 27 percent judged they were less happy in the past. Thus most respondents consider themselves happy, and more often see a decline than an increase in their happiness between 1967 and 1972.

On Cantril's ladder 18 percent of the respondents placed themselves on one of the four lower (less happy) steps, 57 percent chose one of the three middle steps (Steps 4, 5, or 6) and 25 percent chose one of the four upper steps (Table 1). For Cantril's 500 Philippine respondents, who were interviewed in 1959, the parallel percentages were 20, 55, and 25 for males and 23, 55, and 22 for females.³ Despite differences in sample composition and the gap of 13 years, these percentages are very similar. Respondents' ratings of their lives five years ago showed 5 percent more on the lower steps and 3 percent fewer on the upper steps, indicating that respondents believe that they have made only a slight improvement in their lives. The contrast between present ratings and expected ratings five years in the future is more dramatic. The percentage of respondents on the four upper steps doubles, from 25 to 50 percent. Optimism about the future is very strong. Looking at means, one finds a mean past rating of 5.0, a

Table 1

Percentage distribution of respondents by ladder ratings (Metro Manila, January–April 1972)

Ladder step	Past	Present	Future
10	2%	2%	12%
9	3	2	10
8	7	8	15
7	10	13	13
6	13	14	14
5	25	29	15
4	17	14	9
3	11	9	7
2	7	5	3
1	4	2	1
0	1	2	1
Total percent	100%	100%	100%
Total N	929	931	857
Don't know	12	10	84

mean present rating of 5.2, and a mean future rating of 6.4. Cantril (1965) and De Jesus and Benitez (1970) similarly found little difference between past and present ratings but a large increase in future ratings. The respective means for Cantril were 4.9, 4.9 and 6.7, and on De Jesus and Benitez' modified ladder 3.8, 3.9 and 6.8.

Reported happiness (scored from 1 to 3) and ladder ratings correlate at .31 for males and .43 for females. For individual respondents, however, the two measures are not always consistent, particularly in the trend from past to present. Inconsistency between these two trends was shown by 14 percent of all respondents. While one measure indicated that they were happier in the present than in the past, on the other measure the reverse was true. Respondents were asked directly about this discrepancy whenever it occurred, and few of them changed their answers. Most of them explained that their reported happiness had to do with emotional factors, while the ladder rating was interpreted as predominantly economic.

Among the 12 feelings (Table 2) the most frequently experienced was optimism about the future, which 87 percent had experienced at

least once and 69 percent more than once within the previous week. Almost as frequent is a "yearning for change," experienced by 85 percent of the respondents (67 percent more than once). This is one of only two emotions that may be considered negative that is fairly frequently experienced. "Pity for people you know" is the other frequent negative emotion (79 percent), though this may also be interpreted positively, in relation to the self, as reflecting satisfaction with one's circumstances, and therefore the capacity to sympathize with those who are worse off. About 26 to 36 percent of the respondents reported experiencing each of the other six negative emotions. By contrast, the four remaining positive emotions were reported by 47 to 86 percent. The overall emotional profile then is quite positive, although the desire for improvement occurs extremely frequently. The greater frequency of positive over negative feelings may be interpreted as a response bias, assuming the respondents were hesitant to report negative or undesirable emotions. However, since this agrees with the previous finding that most people considered themselves pretty happy, the frequency of positive feelings may mean instead that people want to interpret or actually see life as good, and are more sensitive to the positive emotions and optimistic about what the future has in store.

To determine how the feelings were related to each other, each response was assigned a score (from 0 for "never" to 3 for "often"), and a principal axis factor analysis (with subsequent varimax rotation) was performed on the scores. This was done separately for males and females in order to determine the reliability of the obtained factors (Table 3). In each case four factors accounting for 41 percent of the variance were extracted. The two factor solutions were parallel, with coefficients of congruence (Harman 1967: 270) between corresponding factors exceeding .93 in the absolute.

Factor I has to do with negative emotions, including helplessness, boredom, uneasiness and anger. Each of these involves an emotional reaction to one or another kind of failure to cope with one's environment. None of these feelings has any clear interpersonal reference: they relate

Table 2

Percentage distribution of respondents experiencing particular feelings with different frequencies in the past week (Metro Manila, January–April 1972)

Feelings	Never	Once	Several times	Often	Total percent	Total N
Optimistic about the future	13%	18%	34%	35%	100%	932
Pleased about having accomplished something	14	27	38	21	100	935
A yearning for change	15	18	34	33	100	936
Pity for people you know	21	37	28	13	99	935
Particularly interested or excited about something	30	33	24	12	99	932
On top of the world	53	26	17	5	101	931
Angry at something that usually wouldn't bother you	64	24	8	4	100	934
Vaguely uneasy about something without knowing why	64	21	10	4	99	930
Bored	65	22	9	4	100	933
Depressed or very unhappy	68	20	8	4	100	934
Helpless, with no control over situations	72	20	7	2	101	934
Very lonely or remote from other people	74%	17%	6%	3%	100%	933

primarily to the individual's impersonal environment. Anger, in particular, is not anger at someone else but anger "at something that usually wouldn't bother you." As a generic label for this factor one may use Discomfort at Failure to Cope or simply Discomfort.

Factor II is related to the positive, buoyant emotions, being interested or excited about something, most of all, as well as pleasure at one's accomplishments and feeling "on top of the world." This factor carries a note of engagement and exuberance quite opposite to the previous factor. As Bradburn and Caplovitz found, however, the experiencing of these emotions does not exclude and is not excluded by the experiencing of the previous set. Rather the correlations between the two sets are low, so that one can simultaneously report that he frequently experiences both sets or seldom experiences both. Apart from the three positive

emotions, a fourth item with its highest loading on this factor is "pity for people you know." This seems to indicate that feeling pity is related to feeling satisfied with oneself and superior to others, that it is a form of *noblesse oblige* that only the emotionally wealthy can afford. One may label this factor Enhancement, since the term suggests the excitement and the pleasure in oneself expressed in the individual items.

Factor III is reflected in two items: optimism about the future and a yearning for change. Pleasure at accomplishment has a secondary loading on this factor. A yearning for change implies some discontent with one's life situation, and optimism about the future carries the belief that things could be better than they are, but in this context does not seem to include specific plans for self-improvement. This factor is thus compounded of negative feelings toward the present and positive, but somewhat vague,

Table 3
Rotated factor loadings, by sex

Feelings	Loadings for males				Loadings for females			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Helpless, with no control over situations	-.66	.04	.02	-.11	-.70	.00	.03	-.20
Bored	-.64	-.01	-.08	-.14	-.44	-.00	.04	-.44
Vaguely uneasy about something without knowing why	-.63	.13	-.10	-.10	-.72	-.01	.10	-.20
Angry at something that usually wouldn't bother you	-.54	.17	-.14	-.20	-.44	-.18	.06	-.23
Particularly interested or excited about something	-.12	.64	-.20	-.05	-.12	-.52	.39	-.03
Pleased about having accomplished something	-.02	.53	-.35	.12	-.07	-.46	.44	.03
On top of the world	.04	.41	.12	-.10	.03	-.49	-.01	-.02
Pity for some people you know	-.16	.36	-.08	-.01	-.27	-.30	-.00	-.22
Optimistic about the future	.04	.24	-.62	-.02	.08	-.16	.55	.00
A yearning for change	-.18	-.01	.60	.00	-.26	.14	.44	-.07
Very lonely or remote from other people	-.39	.08	.03	-.63	-.19	-.07	-.00	-.74
Depressed or very unhappy	-.51	.04	.05	-.52	-.34	-.00	.05	-.71
Eigenvalues	2.03	1.10	.96	.77	1.70	.90	.86	1.42

hopes for the future. The label Change-orientation shall be used for it.

Factor IV is reflected in the experiencing of loneliness and depression. Depression is an emotion with strong interpersonal reference, as Davitz (1969) found. It is related to some failure in interpersonal functioning, to an inability to relate productively to others, to the lack of an emotionally satisfying sharing of oneself with others. Factor IV thus contrasts with Factor I, the other negative factor, in relating to social or interpersonal deficiency. This factor is labeled Loneliness.

Factor scores were created for each of these "feeling states," using the factoring for male respondents. Reported happiness and ladder ratings both correlate best with Enhancement ($r = .24$ in each case). Reported happiness also has some relationship to Discomfort ($-.20$) and

a smaller relationship with Change-orientation ($-.12$), while ladder ratings do not relate to the other feeling states.

Correlates of happiness

Various indices of social background and degree of social interaction were investigated in their effects on happiness. Sex by itself makes little difference to happiness: 70 percent of the males and 71 percent of the females are pretty happy or very happy. Mean ladder ratings are practically identical, 5.1 for males and 5.3 for females. Neither males nor females consider themselves *per se* an oppressed class. However sex partially determines what effect other variables have on happiness. These effects are summarized separately for males and females, using gamma coefficients, in Tables 4 and 5. Three sets of predictors are presented, the first

set including various personal characteristics, the second, respondent's evaluation of community conditions, and the third, eight activities that could have occupied the respondent in the past week.

For women, reported happiness is most strongly related to attending a party, going to the movies, eating in a restaurant, and similar activities. It is also strongly related to marital happiness, partly because this was determined through a similar question. Education and household income come next in importance for a happy woman, possibly because of the oppor-

tunities for socializing or cultural enrichment they make possible. For men leisure activities are also important, though much less so. The most important of them is reading a newspaper, which may be considered partly a task-oriented rather than a strictly leisure activity. Marital happiness has about the same importance as with women, but education and income have less effect. It may be that the urban Filipino males in this sample derive their major satisfactions from work-related activities rather than leisure activities, with the exception that the socioemotional rewards of marriage are also crucial to those of

Table 4
Factors affecting happiness, by sex

Factors	Gamma with reported happiness		Gamma with ladder ratings ^a	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
<i>a. Personal characteristics</i>				
Age	-.01	-.00	-.08	.04
Education	.41	.17	.52	.52
Employment status ^b	.15	.18	.22	.10
Household income	.38	.21	.50	.53
Marital status ^c	-.06	.18	-.16	-.04
Marital happiness ^d	.47	.41	.27	.21
<i>b. Community conditions^e</i>				
Living conditions in neighborhood	.19	.15	.34	.17
Estimate of chances of being robbed	.07	.05	-.10	-.02
<i>c. Social activities^f</i>				
Read a newspaper	.46	.21	.60	.42
Went to church	.28	.10	.32	.16
Went shopping	.45	.18	.40	.45
Ate in a restaurant	.46	.12	.53	.42
Went to the movies	.52	.02	.36	.24
Attended a party	.53	.19	.47	.42
Bet or gambled	.15	-.05	.28	-.03
Participated in sports	.46	.06	.24	.19

^aCollapsed into four categories for the first eight gammas and three categories for the last eight.

^bNot in the labor force/unemployed/employed.

^cWidowed/never married/married.

^dSelf-assessment, including married respondents only.

^eRespondent's own evaluations.

^fFrequency of each activity in the past week (not at all/once/more than once).

Table 5
Factors affecting feeling states, by sex

Factors ^a	Discomfort		Enhancement		Change-orientation		Loneliness	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
<i>a. Personal characteristics</i>								
Age	-.12 ^b	-.14	-.06	.03	-.01	-.09	-.04	-.09
Education	-.00	.14	.22	.22	-.08	.05	-.06	-.07
Employment status	-.06	-.13	.03	.03	.07	.12	-.04	-.05
Household income	.06	.14	.26	.25	-.03	.02	.02	-.12
Marital status	-.01	-.20	.16	.12	-.07	-.01	-.06	-.23
Marital happiness	-.27	-.09	.32	.33	-.17	-.22	-.18	-.06
<i>b. Community conditions</i>								
Living conditions in neighborhood	-.07	-.12	.05	.18	-.06	-.10	-.08	.02
Estimate of chances of being robbed	.06	.01	.06	.04	.03	.02	-.04	-.02

^aSee footnotes b-f to Table 4.

^bGamma coefficients, with factor scores on each feeling state divided roughly into quartiles.

them who are married. Reported happiness is also higher among the employed, among those who are more satisfied with living conditions in their neighborhoods, and among those who belong to some organization or are in more frequent contact with friends or relatives. Married males are slightly happier than single males, but married females are slightly unhappier than single females. The widowed of both sexes are singularly unhappy.

The factors affecting ladder ratings are similar, but show differences in emphasis. Income and education are more important determinants of ladder ratings than of reported happiness, particularly for males. The different leisure activities, which are mostly related to having higher incomes (except for gambling), also contribute to being higher on the ladder. Marital happiness is less significant, though still a

factor. Living conditions in one's neighborhood increase in importance for females, though not for males. A number of other factors also relate to ladder ratings, such as maintaining contact with a larger number of relatives, belonging to one or more organizations, being employed, and being single rather than married.

The feeling states are less tied to status positions and the demographic characteristics of individuals than either ladder ratings or reported happiness. The first feeling state, Discomfort, has different determinants for males and females. For females, Discomfort is related to marital unhappiness, being single, being unemployed, and being young (21-29 years). Discomfort is low among those happy in their marriages and, unusually, among the widowed. Education and income do not affect Discomfort among females, although worse living

conditions in the community lead to higher Discomfort. For females Discomfort seems to be a disease of the young and unattached, who are not particularly lonely but whose attachments are shallow and whose loyalties and commitments are still vague. Those who are married but whose marital relations are unsatisfactory also are affected. This female complaint appears to cut across social classes, and is not solved by having more money to spend or greater social prominence. For males, Discomfort is not related to marital happiness. Where a woman might consider marital tension evidence of her own inability to cope, a man would be less likely to make such an inference, and while marital tension would reduce his happiness it need not lead to feelings of Discomfort. Being single, being young, and being unemployed or not in the labor force also contribute to Discomfort among males. However, in contrast to females, education and income are related to Discomfort for males, and the relationship in both cases is positive: the better educated and those with higher incomes experience more Discomfort. It is possible that education gives a man emotional sensitivities that only women would otherwise possess, or that lack of income prevents a man from enjoying the luxury of worrying about his ability to cope. One leisure activity has some relation to Discomfort: betting or gambling. This may be an indication of escape from realistic coping with one's environment, which could be a natural consequence of higher levels of Discomfort.

Of the four feeling states, Enhancement is the most predictable from external status characteristics of individuals. Measures of association between Enhancement and salient personal characteristics are generally higher than similar measures with the other feeling states. That Enhancement is not primarily tied to task achievement is shown by the fact that its strongest relationship, for both males and females, is with marital happiness. Also strong are its relationships with income, with material possessions, among different leisure activities with going shopping in particular, and with education. Enhancement may mean the sense that one has and can enjoy the "good things

in life," from an understanding spouse to a full shopping basket. Enhancement is also related to speaking more dialects, to having more personal friends, and interestingly enough, to considering oneself more religious. Higher on Enhancement are married men and single women, which has unfavorable implications for the status of the urban housewife. Employed males are higher, as are unemployed females. Men between the ages of 40 and 49 are higher than men at other ages.

The third feeling state, Change-orientation, is related to less satisfactory interpersonal relationships. Those unhappy in their marriages are higher on Change-orientation, as are those with fewer personal friends. Where living conditions are bad, Change-orientation is higher. Single males and employed males are high, but males and females above 50, who presumably have begun to come to terms with their lives, are low.

The feeling state of Loneliness has the fewest correlates. Like Discomfort, it strikes the young (21-29) and single males, and is related to marital unhappiness among females. Unlike Discomfort, it is related to lower rather than higher incomes. Unexpectedly, it shows no relationship to frequency of interaction with relatives, friends, and in organizations. It may be related more to quality than quantity in interpersonal relations, but this argument is partly vitiated by its failure to relate to the number of personal friends one has. The distinction between discomfort and loneliness (which includes depression) may be an artificial one, in which case the attempt to produce orthogonal scores of these two dimensions may be responsible for unclear results. Or, as an alternate possibility, this factor of loneliness plus depression may be a more private and idiosyncratic matter than the other feeling states, and consequently less tied to external status characteristics.

Discussion

The results have demonstrated the feasibility of developing, in the context of a social survey, measures of happiness on which interpersonal comparisons are possible and which have systematic and interpretable relations with a variety of predictors. The more complicated measures,

based on various feelings, behave less predictably than simple and direct measures that require respondents themselves to integrate the various factors that contribute to their happiness and come out with a single summary judgment.

Reported happiness and ladder ratings reflect two different though correlated types of assessments which individuals make of their life situations. Reported happiness is a more affectively tinged judgment, reflecting personal and in a sense more private predilections for enjoyment, as well as more personal fears and uneasiness. Though measures over time were not obtained, it may be inferred that this score is more volatile, more subject to change as the seasons and the round of one's daily and especially leisure activities change. The quality of interpersonal relations, as in marriage, is a critical factor in happiness. By contrast, ladder ratings are a more objective, more "public" assessment of oneself against the success goals and achievement stereotypes appropriate to one's age and sex as defined by the society. These judgments should be more stable, likely to change only when one undergoes some transition in status. Ladder ratings are often explicitly tied with one's economic situation. Education, which serves to assign not only occupational chances but also prestige to individuals, is of great importance in ladder ratings. One's job, for men, and one's neighborhood, for women, which are major factors in how one presents oneself socially, should strongly affect ladder ratings. In an urban milieu in which youth and singlehood are developing their own cachet, it is reasonable to find the single rating themselves higher on the ladder, though when one counts up their personal satisfactions they may be individually less happy.

None of the four feeling states is a simple and direct measure of happiness. As Bradburn and Caplovitz found, positive and negative feelings are not just opposites but vary independently. One factor is identifiable as a dimension of positive feelings and the other three as predominantly negative. As expected, the sense of personal Enhancement, the one positive feeling state, contributes to reported happiness, and the first two negative feeling states, Discomfort

at failure to cope with one's environment and Change-orientation contribute to unhappiness. Only Enhancement, however, which is status-related, contributes to ladder ratings. That demographic characteristics do not predict feeling states too well may reflect the evanescence of these feelings or may simply be due to the respondents' having been asked only about their feelings of the previous week.

The attempt to measure happiness may be seen in the context of recent efforts to develop social indicators to reflect the health or sickness of a social system in a manner analogous to the way in which economic indicators reflect the vigor or lassitude of an economy. With the increasing skepticism about economic development in the developing countries, the need for adequate indices of social development becomes more urgent (Western 1973). Such factors as the adequacy of medical care, the quality of the educational system, and the effectiveness of the mass media are all important to index, but have the limitation of being external to individuals: they tell us the social and environmental conditions within which people live, but only indirectly how people react to these conditions, how they appraise them in terms of their own personal satisfactions. The further development of measures of happiness is therefore essential in filling out the picture of society's concerns, as well as in recapturing the subjectivity that is submerged in behaviorist models of man.

Notes

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1. For greater detail regarding the sample see Bulatao 1973.

2. Total exceeds 100 percent because of rounding.

3. Similar studies by Averch, Koehler, and Denton (1971) and by De Jesus and Benitez (1970) do not

permit this comparison, since their ladders went from Step 1 to Step 10, excluding Step 0.

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