

A Quarterly Review of Social Reports and Research on Social Indicators, Social Trends, and the Quality-of-Life.
News Included of Working Group 6 on Social Indicators and Social Reporting of the International Sociological Association.

YANG YANG ON

THE DYNAMICS OF, AND HETEROGENEITY IN, SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE

AND OVER TIME IN THE UNITED STATES:

The study of subjective well-being, as measured by responses to questions about life satisfaction and happiness is a key component of quality-of-life studies and social indicators research in these early years of the 21st century. One branch of happiness studies derives from the discipline of psychology (see the review in this issue of the recent Diener and Diener book). Another branch derives its primary motivation from broader sociological studies of the variation in happiness across social and demographic groupings, societies, and time.

A recent article in this latter tradition, "Social Inequalities in Happiness in the United States, 1972 – 2004: An Age-Period-Cohort Analysis," by Yang Yang was published in the April 2008 issue of the American Sociological Review (Volume 73, pp. 204-226). Because it sets new standard in sophistication of analysis, and because it appeared in a journal that might not be frequented by many members of ISQOLS, the contents of this article merit review.

Data

Yang uses data from the longest available, consistently measured, series on happiness in the U.S., namely, the General Social Surveys over the 32-year period from 1972 to 2004. The GSS is an ongoing survey that has monitored the attitudes and behaviors of adults in the U.S. since 1972. It is among the best sources of national data on happiness in the country. It also spans the longest time period in the U.S. and is part of Ruut

Veenhoven's World Database on Happiness. Each survey uses multistage stratified probability sampling and includes a nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized adults age 18 and older in the U.S. Happiness is assessed by a conventional single-item scale reported from respondents. The sample sizes range from about 1,500 to 3,000 across survey years. The data on happiness are available annually from 1972 – 1994 (except for 1979, 1981, and 1992) and biannually from 1994 to 2004. In all years, the GSS item on overall happiness is: "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days – would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?" The responses are coded as 1 (= very happy), 2 (= pretty happy), and 3 (= not too happy).

There were 41,886 black and white respondents in the GSS with data on reported happiness. Yang's analysis focuses on black and white disparities and excludes a small number of respondents of other races (less than 3%). Regression analyses showed no significant differences between respondents of other races and the black respondents in subjective well-being. The listwise deletion of missing values yields a final sample of 28,869 respondents. The difference between the final sample and those excluded due to missing values is not statistically significant ($t=1.74, p=.082$). Although the exclusion of these cases substantially reduced the sample size, the final sample provides a large number of observations for the subsequent regression analysis. The same sample used across models facilitates comparisons of model fit.

Research Questions

Most generally, Yang studies the ques-

Editor's Note: One of the contemporary foundations of quality-of-life and social indicators research is studies of subjective well-being in general and happiness in particular. In this issue, I review two recent contributions to this subject. The first is a recent article by Yang Yang in the American Sociological Review. This article sets new standards for the socio-demographic analyses of variations in happiness across demographic and socio-economic groupings and temporal trends therein by age, time period, and birth cohort. The second is a new book on the psychology of happiness by Ed Diener and Rober Biswas-Diener. This book summarizes, for a general audience, much of the research literature on happiness, especially research conducted from a psychological disciplinary base. SINET readers will want to be aware of both of these contributions.

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SINET

Social Indicators Network News

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tion: How do Americans fare in happiness? And what are the similarities and differences in their levels of happiness across major socio-demographic groupings. Previous research using the GSS suggests that different demographic and socioeconomic groups do not fare equally well. Analyses of correlates of happiness, however, have mostly been concerned with cross-sectional individual-level characteristics and attainments. Such studies do not permit a simultaneous assessment of the age, time period, and birth cohort effects. These temporal sources of variations in subjective well-being need to be distinguished because they are crucial for attributions of explanatory mechanisms and generalizability of research findings. Second, there is little sociological understanding of the heterogeneity in life course patterns, time trends, and birth cohort differences. The possibility that age, period, and birth cohort differences may be modified by social statuses merits a systematic investigation.

Thus, Yang specifically assesses the following questions: What are the net age, period, and birth cohort effects on happiness? Do findings of life course patterns and time trends from prior studies hold when all three types of variation are taken into account? To what extent do they actually reflect birth cohort differences? Furthermore, do social inequalities in happiness by sex, race, and education increase or decrease over the life course, over time, and across successive birth cohorts?

Analytic Methods

The GSS uses a repeated cross-sectional sample survey design. This design is increasingly available to social scientists and provides unique opportunities for age-period-cohort (APC) analysis. Pooling data of all survey years, one can formulate a rectangular age by period array of respondents, where columns correspond to age-specific observations collected in each survey year and rows are observations from each age across years. Linking the diagonal cells of the array yields the observations belonging to people born during the same calendar years who age together. Although only a longitudinal panel study design provides data from true birth cohorts that follow identical individuals over time, the repeated cross-section design allows for a classic demographic analysis using a synthetic cohort approach that traces essentially the same groups of people from the same birth cohorts over a large segment of the life span. Compared to longitudinal designs that usually span relatively short time periods and follow a single birth cohort, the synthetic cohort approach has the advantage of facilitating the simultaneous tests of age and period effects across multiple cohorts because it is based on representative national surveys of all ages conducted regularly from one period to the next and covering more than three decades. It suffers less from the difficulty in locating sample respondents across time in panel studies, although it is not exempt from attrition due to mortality.

After reviewing limitations of the classical multiple classification model for APC analysis and the unique features of repeated cross-section sample survey designs, Yang applies recently developed hierarchical age-period-cohort (HAPC) statistical models for repeated cross-section surveys (Yang and Land 2006; Yang and Land 2008) to test hypotheses about age changes in happiness that are independent of the effects of historical period and cohort membership. A cross-classified random effects model (CCREM) is specified to take into account the embeddedness of respondents in the GSS surveys within a time period by birth cohort cross-classified matrix.

Findings

Applying the recently developed HAPC analytic tool to the pooled GSS data yields six major findings: *First, the results show life course patterns, time trends, and birth cohort differences in happiness that are distinct and independent of each other.* Figure 1 from Yang's article reproduced nearby shows her estimates of the age, time period, and cohort effects. The significant age, period, and cohort effects – net of individual-level explanatory variables – suggest that it is important to formally test variations in all three time-related dimensions in studies of changes in subjective well-being for adequate interpretation and valid inference with regard to these effects. In other words, future analyses of long-term trends in happiness should not ignore any of the age, period, or cohort dimensions.

Second, with age comes happiness. That is, overall levels of happiness increase with age, net of other factors. This supports the age as maturity hypothesis suggested by the role theory of aging. The age effects are strong and are independent of the time

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period and cohort effects. Adjusting for relevant socio-demographic covariates changed the shapes of the age trajectories of happiness, but did not alter their positive slopes. Also, in models of happiness where all three temporal factors are considered, the age effects dominate and the period and cohort variations are small. This suggests that studies of temporal changes in subjective well-being that ignore life course changes across the ages of adulthood may be misleading in giving the impression that time trends and cohort differences of happiness are more substantial than they actually are. *Third, there are life course variations in the social disparities of happiness.* All three stratifying effects examined—sex, race, and education—show decreases with age, suggesting that the cumulative advantage/disadvantage model that predicts diverging social inequalities

with age does not apply to life course changes in happiness. Instead, these results resemble findings of convergence in SES differences in health related studies. Yang indicates that several mechanisms could be at work:

- The leveling of protective and harmful socioeconomic and other stratifying factors with increasing age can attenuate social differences in exposure to these factors and lead to the disappearance in the disadvantages for men, blacks, and people with low education in the latter part of the life course.
- Selective survival also may play a role in explaining the positive age effect and the leveling of stratification effects. Higher levels of happiness in older adults may result from selective survival of respondents who are happier. Yang's analyses indicate that selective survival may have contributed to the convergence in age patterns of happiness she found, but it is unlikely that it acts as the only or dominant force that drives such changes.

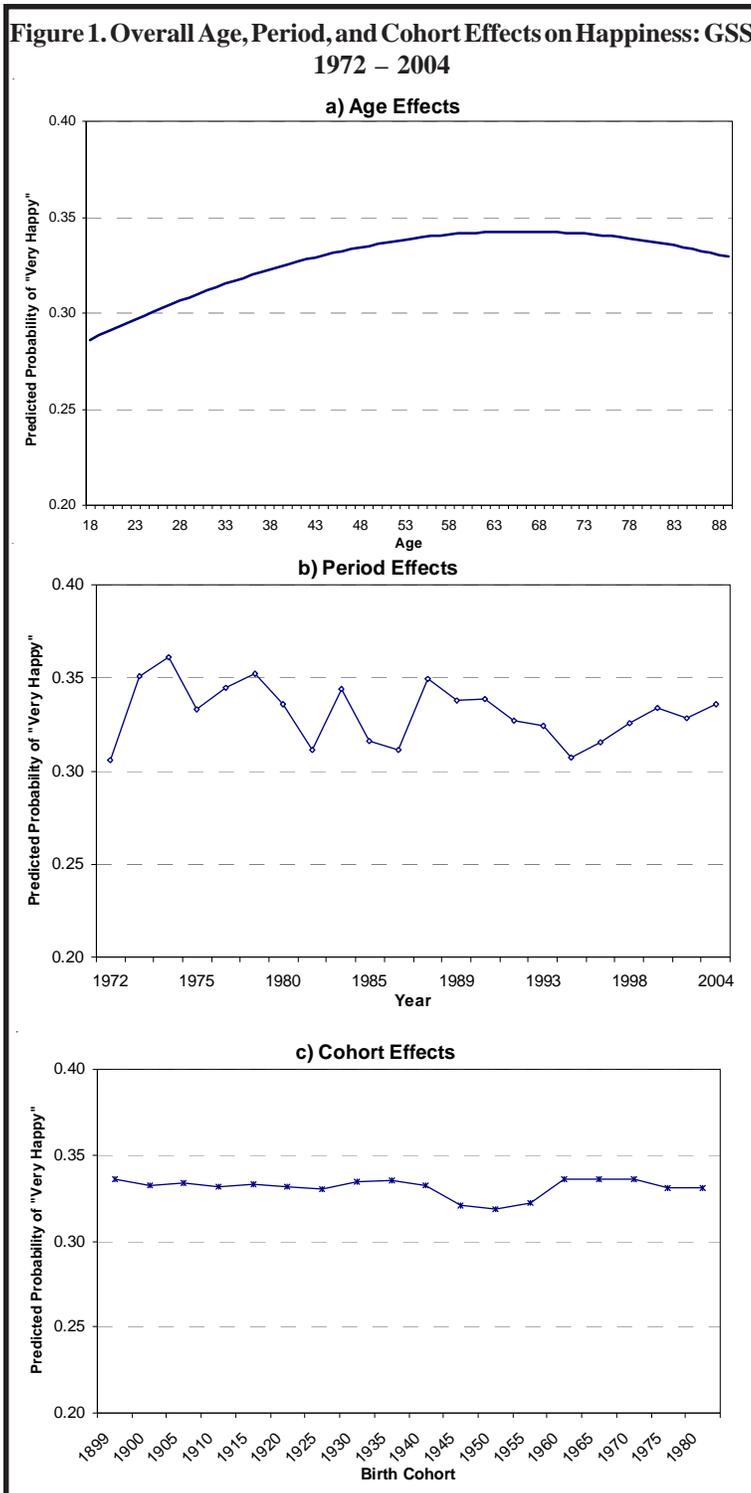
Fourth, levels of happiness also changed over time periods. Net of other things, Americans were happier in some years than others. In support of relative utility theory, the positive cross-sectional effects of economic conditions on subjective well-being did not translate into continuous period increases of happiness. Instead of a linear decline in happiness found in some previous studies using the same data, Yang detects a nonlinear trend that was downward first and upward later. These period effects are statistically significant albeit small.

Fifth, Yang also found that the seemingly stable overall time trends in happiness mask substantial subgroup differences. Both sex and race inequalities declined over the last 30 years, showing signs of social progress. From the period of 1972 to 1995, happiness levels remained stable for men and blacks but worsened slightly for women and whites. After 1995, all groups experienced improvement. The other major trend is that, while the male and female gap largely disappeared in the most recent decade, the black and white gap persisted. This corroborates and extends other findings of trends in racial disparity in quality of life in the U.S. and suggests that such disparity, although having decreased moderately with time, continued into the first decade of the 21st century.

Yang notes that it is not well understood what could have contributed to period changes. There is evidence that higher GDP buys extra happiness and higher unemployment rates decrease happiness, but the effects of macroeconomic conditions are generally small. If, indeed, period changes in happiness are induced by economic changes, then Yang's findings on period changes in sex and race differentials could mean that the effects of economic improvement on sense of well-being were more pronounced for men and blacks compared to women and whites. The apparent decline in the happiness level of women relative to men across time could also reflect the effects of increasing female labor force participation and divorce rates. It is possible that women suffered more from these cultural changes due to increasing levels of social stress associated with balancing work and family.

Last, but not least, there exist cohort changes in

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happiness that are not confounded with the aging and period effects. There is barely any evidence in prior studies for cohort differences in happiness, though there are speculations that more recent cohorts have experienced lower levels of happiness. Yang's results do not strongly support such a hypothesis when confounding effects are controlled. Yang does not find the monotonic declines in levels of happiness in successive birth cohorts that previous research had speculated might be engendered by cohorts' value shifts under the influence of "post-materialism". Rather, she finds that Baby Boomers (born in the post-World War II years, 1946-1964) have experienced less happiness on average (see the dip in the estimates of cohort effect in Part C of Figure 1 corresponding to the Boomer birth cohorts) than both earlier and most recent cohorts. Therefore, in support of Easterlin's (1987) theory of birth and fortune, cohort differences in subjective well-being seem to be closely related to early life conditions and formative experiences. Larger cohort sizes increased the competition to enter schools and the labor market and created more strains to achieve expected economic success and family life. The unique experiences of these cohorts during early adulthood thus can have a lasting impact on their sense of happiness.

Yang concludes that there are several other questions her study did not resolve that merit additional research.

First, higher levels of subjective well-being in old age are regarded as a paradox. That is, despite the physiological declines, the onset of frailty and social losses such as widowhood that are characteristic of late life, older adults are able to appraise their quality of life positively and sustain high levels of well-being.

Second, although the repeated cross-sectional design facilitates age-period-cohort analysis, only longitudinal panel data can provide the strongest and most conclusive evidence of intra-individual age changes. Unfortunately, there are few nationally representative longitudinal surveys that include more than two or three waves of measures on subjective quality of life to allow for inferences about life course patterns across adulthood. The age effects found in Yang's study, therefore, were interpreted in the context of synthetic cohorts rather than real birth cohorts that were followed prospectively. The findings undoubtedly need to be corroborated and supplemented with those from panel studies in the future.

Third, average levels of happiness show

very small changes over the past 30 years and across cohorts. There have been no previous sociological discussions about stability in cohort trends of happiness, but the stability and lack of increase in happiness over time across a number of developed countries have been objects of attention and debates in the quality of life/social indicators community (Easterlin 1995; Hagerty and Veenhoven 2003; Veenhoven and Hagerty 2006). In these debates, no agreement about the direction of the change in happiness over time is possible, partly because of the lack of age-period-cohort analysis that explicates the true period effects. This study contributes stronger evidence of period changes in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Based on this, we can further ask: how can such stability be explained when the society has gone through tremendous economic growth and changes in the social and political environment? Cross-national comparative studies are needed to understand to what extent social structures and processes produce changes in happiness at the population level.

Comment

Yang was my doctoral student (Yang 2005) and we have jointly developed the new statistical models for age, period, and cohort analysis of repeated cross-section survey designs. Yang subsequently developed this empirical application to the GSS happiness series. The vast majority of prior social research on subjective well-being to date has focused on its cross-sectional individual level determinants. A comprehensive temporal analysis for understanding the distinct effects of individual characteristics and external circumstances on perceptions of life quality did not exist. Yang has provided this. It is an impressive foundation on which to build future analyses.

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Call For Papers Applied Research in Quality of Life

*The Official Journal of the International Society
for Quality-of-Life Studies*

The aim of this journal is to publish conceptual, methodological and empirical papers dealing with quality-of-life studies in the applied areas of the natural and social sciences. As the official journal of ISQOLS, it is designed to attract papers that have some direct implications for or impact on practical applications of research on the quality-of-life. We welcome papers crafted from interdisciplinary, inter-professional and international perspectives. This research should guide decision making in a variety of professions, industries, nonprofit, and government sectors such as healthcare, travel and tourism, marketing, corporate management, community planning, social work, public administration, human resource management, among others. The goal is to help decision makers apply performance measures and outcome assessment techniques based on concepts such as well-being, human satisfaction, human development, happiness, wellness and quality of life. The Editorial Review Board is divided into specific sections indicating the broad scope of practice covered by the journal, and the section editors are distinguished scholars from many countries across the globe.

Authors interested in submitting manuscripts for publication should consult the website <http://ariq.edmgr.com>. Manuscripts should be directed to the relevant Section Editor of the Editorial Review Board. If an appropriate Section Editor can not be identified, direct the manuscript to the current Editor in Chief, Alex Michalos.

Global Peace Index

Britain's Economist Intelligence Unit has issued a Global Peace Index which ranks 140 countries on their devotion to peace. Military expenditures, respect for human rights, the homicide rate, a measure of corruption, access to primary education, the percent of the population in jail, the potential for terrorist attacks, and other indicators are combined. It measures the absence of peace. The top ten countries begin with Iceland and Denmark, continues with Norway, New Zealand, Japan, Ireland, Portugal, Finland, Luxembourg, and Austria. The United States ranked 97th and the United Kingdom, 49th. The index should be useful for international studies of the QOL by country.

~Abbott L. Ferriss

Counting Children In!

Child Indicators: Research, Theory, Policy and Practice

2nd International Conference of International Society for Child Indicators 4th and 5th November, 2009

And

The Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre

University of Western Sydney Symposium 'Children as Experts in Their Own Lives: Developing Child Inclusive Research Policy and Practice

3rd November, 2009

The Conference Organising Committee for the second ISCI conference advises you of the opportunity to participate in the conference **Counting Children In! Child Indicators: Research Theory, Policy and Practice** to be held in Sydney, Australia on Wednesday 4th and Thursday 5th November, 2009. This conference will be held at the Parramatta campus of the University of Western Sydney.

An associated conference - The Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre (UWS) Symposium **'Children as Experts in Their Own Lives: Developing Child Inclusive Research Policy and Practice'** - will be held at the same venue on Tuesday 3rd November, 2009.

THE ISCI CONFERENCE **Counting Children In!**

The ISCI conference has been designed to promote dialogue around concepts of child indicators and of child well-being, amongst diverse stakeholders and between research, theory, policy and practice. Abstracts and poster presentations will be invited from practitioners, researchers, policy makers and academics.

The conference will include plenary sessions addressed by keynote speakers, contributed papers and structured opportunities for conference participants to discuss issues arising at the conference.

Message from the President of ISQOLS

2009 Conference

Florence, Italy, July 19-23, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

We are already more than half way through the year. It will soon be time to prepare your abstract in response to the Call for Papers for our next conference. We will be meeting in Florence, Italy, from 19 to 23 July 2009. Filomena Maggino and her co-chairs Alex Michalos and Giampaolo Nuvolati are well advanced in their conference planning. Florence promises to be one of our most exciting meetings ever. It will chart new goals for QOL in measuring progress in societies. Our hosts are organizing an affordable as well as an environmentally friendly* conference for us in one of the world's most cultured cities. We hope to see you there!

~Valerie Møller, President, ISQOLS

* A first for ISQOLS: our statistician hosts are considering the possibility of calculating the conference's ecological footprint. – Remember to pack your sandals!

Announcement for Supplemental Modules to the 2010 U. S. General Social Survey

For the 2010 General Social Survey (GSS), funds are expected from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support added supplements. Proposals for topics for these NSF-funded modules are solicited from the social science community. The program is described at

Call for Proposals to Add Questions to the 2010 GSS."

<http://www.norc.org/NR/rdonlyres/2E75FB22-4D36-474F-AA28-97D9A2C04B6C/998CallforProposalsToAddQuestionstothe2010GSS.pdf>

Please note the submission deadline of October 1, 2008.

In addition, the GSS expects to have space available on the survey for modules not funded by NSF. Those who want to fund a paid supplement on the 2010 GSS should consult the document at

"Guidelines for Paid Supplements to the GSS."

[http://www.norc.org/NR/rdonlyres/2E75FB22-4D36-474F-AA28-97D9A2C04B6C/997](http://www.norc.org/NR/rdonlyres/2E75FB22-4D36-474F-AA28-97D9A2C04B6C/997GuidelinesforPaidSupplementstotheGSS.pdf) GuidelinesforPaidSupplementstotheGSS.pdf

If you have any questions about either program, please contact Tom W. Smith, GSS Director, smitht@norc.uchicago.edu

DIENER AND DIENER'S BOOK ON HAPPINESS AND HOW TO FIND IT

On the following page is the announcement of the recent publication of Ed Diener's latest book, a book intended for a general audience of folks who are interested in happiness, understanding it, what it means, what its limitations are, and how to obtain it. The book is co-authored with Robert Biswas-Diener, Ed's son.

Many members of ISQOLS are familiar with Ed, as he has participated in the Society and was one of its first presidents. Ed is a Distinguished Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has conducted research on happiness and, more generally, subjective well-being for over 25 years, having published his first article suitably titled "Subjective Well-Being" in *Psychological Bulletin* in 1984. Along with other psychologists such as Martin Seligman and David Myers, Ed has been a leader in the "positive psychology" movement in the discipline of psychology, the drive to turn this discipline to the study of the positive aspects of human thoughts and feelings and not just the more pathological, negative aspects thereof. Most recently, Ed is known among social indicators researchers for his idea of using a gross national happiness index to complement the commonly used gross domestic product in the measurement of the wealth of cities, states, and countries.

But Ed is only the tip of the Diener family iceberg of students of psychology and happiness. Ed's spouse Carol also is a psychologist and author of the Foreword to the present volume, as is his son and co-author Robert and Ed and Carol's twin daughters, Marissa and Mary Beth. Robert has followed Ed into studies of happiness and is Program Director at the Center for Applied Positive Psychology in the United Kingdom and part-time lecturer at Portland State University. His contribution to this line of research is to extend Ed's work from the research laboratory to the field. Specifically, Robert has conducted subjective well-being studies in remote and hard-to-access groups such as tribal Kenyans, the Greenland Inuits, and the Amish. This line of research has led to Robert's label as the "Indiana Jones of positive psychology." Robert also has major interests in how happiness research can be applied to help people live better lives and regularly consults with, and coaches, individuals and organizations in applications of positive psychology.

This is the team that authored this book. Let me briefly note a couple of key points. First, the Dieners use the term "psychological wealth" in the subtitle and throughout the book. It is defined (p. 6) as "... the experience of well-being and a high quality of life. It is more than simple fleeting joy, and more than an absence of depression and anxiety... [it] is the experience that our life is excellent – that we are living in a rewarding, engaged, meaningful, and enjoyable way... [it] includes life satisfaction, the feeling that life is full of meaning, a sense of engagement of positive feelings, and a sense of spirituality that connects people to things larger than themselves. Taken together, these fundamental psychological experiences constitute true wealth."

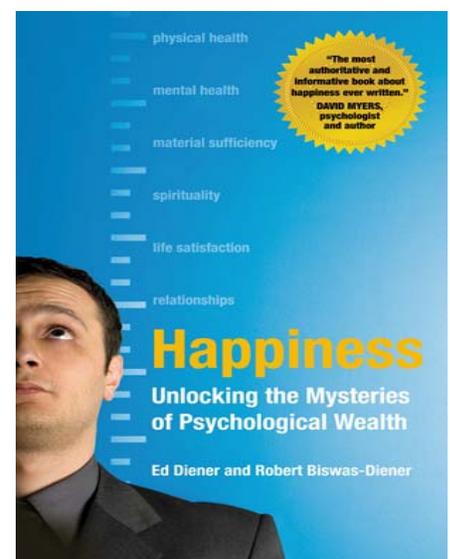
Second, the authors state two principles underlying psychological wealth (p. 9) "The first is that happiness is a process, not a place... Although money, national origin, and marital status are correlated with subjective well-being, the relationship is sometimes small relative to other causes of happiness. Rather, happiness is an ongoing process that requires a way of experiencing life and the world that includes positive attitudes, meaning, and spirituality. Being truly rich is as much about the attitudes within us as the circumstances surrounding us. The second major principle in rethinking happiness and understanding psychological wealth is that it is beneficial to effective functioning."

In brief, principle 1 is that happiness is a process and principle 2 is that happy people function better. Part II of the book has three chapters that review the research on principle 2, specifically on how happiness is related to health, social relationships, and functioning at work. Part III similarly reviews the research on causes of happiness and presents the Dieners' Attention, Interpretation, and Memory (AIM) model of how individuals can focus on positive experiences, and savor and remember those happy moments. Part and parcel of the Dieners conceptualization and research on happiness is that "super-happiness" or constant cheerfulness and euphoria are not realistic or functional. The AIM model lays the foundation for Part IV which has chapters on the more applied aspects of happiness. An Epilogue on the science of happiness completes the volume. Here the authors note

that the scientific study of happiness is relatively young, that it provides a means to debunk many myths attached to happiness, and cite biological self-report, informant report, thought listing, memory, and experience sampling methods of study.

Comment

The study of subjective well-being and happiness has gotten a lot of play recently, in part due to the work and productivity of scholars associated with ISQOLS. Among the latter, Ed Diener has one of the longest and most productive track records of research. It is good to see this book in print, as it builds upon the long stream of research conducted by Ed and Robert and others associated with these two over the years. The body of solid research on which this book rests is outstanding. This is not to say that everything has been done. But much more is known about this subject today than when Ed published his 1984 article. And it is good that the Dieners have brought all of this foundation of research to bear on a subject that is of great interest to many individuals and groups in contemporary societies – and in the format of a book intended for a general audience. ~ Kenneth C. Land



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Happiness

Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener

The world's leading expert on happiness, Dr. Ed Diener challenges our modern assumptions about the causes and consequences of happiness. Ed and his son Robert Biswas-Diener share the results of three decades of research on happiness to help unlock the mysteries of this elusive Holy Grail. In this fascinating book the father and son team presents scientific evidence revealing that happiness is not overrated, and is good for people's health, social relationships, job success, longevity, and altruism. They also show why "super-happiness" is not a desirable goal.

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Acclaim for this Book

"This is the most authoritative and informative book about happiness ever written. That's not surprising, given that its authors are the world's leading happiness researcher and his psychologist-son, whose vocation is coaching people toward happier lives."

- David Myers, *Pursuit of Happiness*

"Finally the definitive book on happiness... The authors bring over thirty years of research and practice into this engaging book that reveals the secrets of psychological wealth – your true net worth – which includes your attitudes toward life, social support, spiritual development, material resources, and health. This is a landmark book that should be read not only by laypersons but also by scholars, educators, business leaders and decision-makers interested in global well-being and human happiness."

- Jim Clifton, Chairman & CEO, *The Gallup Organization*

"A great gift from the leading professional scientist of happiness in the world and his son, the 'Indiana Jones' of positive psychology." - Martin E. P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*

Some Major Points in the Book:

- Psychological wealth is more than money. It is also your attitudes, goals and engaging activities at work.
- Happiness not only feels good, but is beneficial to relationships, work and health.
- It is helpful to set realistic expectations about happiness. No one is intensely happy all of the time.
- Thinking is an important aspect to happiness. Our theory of Attention, Interpretation, and Memory (AIM) helps readers increase their psychological wealth.
- Several myths are addressed in this book:
 - Does money buy happiness?
 - Is there a happiness set-point?
 - Is happiness a personal pursuit?

A New Journal – *Child Indicators Research*

Volume 1 Number 1 of *Child Indicators Research* is now available on the SpringerLink web site at <http://springerlink.com>

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Profiles of Civic Life Skills Among Adolescents: Indicators for Researchers, Policymakers, and the Public

Author(s) Judith Torney-Purta, Carolyn Barber, Britt Wilkenfeld, Gary Homana

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ISQOLS

I would like to point out a few resources available through ISQOLS' website. *First*, ISQOLS listserv is an important communication tool. As you can see from the e-mail you receive from ISQOLS, the listserv is very active. The distribution list of the listserv is 2,000+. Subscription to the listserv is for free and it reaches a very wide audience of QOL researchers worldwide. It is the fastest and the most expeditious way to make announcements about new programs, books, conferences, workshops, new issues of our journals (SIR, JOHS, and ARQOL), job postings, QOL articles in the mass media, news about QOL researchers, etc. These announcements are then posted on ISQOLS' homepage for a several months. Don't hesitate to use the listserv to make announcements of programs, events, or any other piece of news you think the QOL research community at large may be interested in. Also get your QOL colleagues and graduate students to subscribe to listserv. Again, subscription is for free. All you need to do is send an e-mail message to isqols@vt.edu and say "subscribe to listserv" as your message (or something to that effect).

Second, the website is a goldmine of resources. I would like to draw your attention to the Resources site. It is divided into three sets of pages: (1) Bibliographic Resources, (2) Database Resources, and (3) Educational Resources. The Bibliographic Resources pages contain many references of books and review articles related to many QOL topics. It is indeed a resource goldmine, especially for those who would like to identify key works related to a particular QOL topic (e.g., subjective well-being, QOL and the elderly, children well-being, QOL and the disabled, QOL and the poor, environmental well-being, social well-being, economic/financial well-being, quality of work life, consumer well-being). Check out these resources and see what you might be missing from your own personal library. On the other hand, if you are aware of certain books and review articles related to a particular QOL topic that are not included on ISQOLS website, please let me know. Send a message to me (Joe Sirgy, sirgy@vt.edu) and I will make sure that these new items are incorporated into the Bibliographic Resources website. The Database Resources pages contain many references to available data bases capturing QOL (or certain dimensions of QOL) of certain populations. Again, if you are aware of data bases that are available to the QOL research community that are not listed on that site, please let me know and I'll make sure that the new references are incorporated and publicized on that site. The Educational Resources pages contain links to syllabi of QOL-related courses that you may find helpful—that is, if you are teaching (or planning to teach) a QOL-related course. Again, if you teach a QOL-related course and you would like to share your course syllabus with the QOL research community, send it to me, and I'll post on that site. The Educational Resources site also contains lectures (video and/or PowerPoint slides). If you have video and/or PowerPoint lectures you would like to share with the QOL community, don't hesitate to send these to me, and I'll get them posted. One caveat: these pages are restricted to ISQOLS members only (those who paid their membership dues). If you have not paid your membership dues, then please do and take advantage of these resources.

Third, another goldmine resource is the Oral History page. That page contains a number of oral history videotaped interviews with some of our gurus (our most renowned QOL researchers such as Alex Michalos, Ed Diener, Abbott Ferriss, Richard Easterlin, David Myers, and Richard Estes). Professor Michael Frisch of Baylor University (USA) has labored hard to develop several of these videotapes. If you like to know more about our QOL research gurus, check out the Oral History page.

Fourth, under the Membership icon, there are additional resources you may find valuable. The Membership Directory is a handy tool for many in identifying contact information of QOL researchers and colleagues. The website does not only contain current membership rolls but also past rolls. Also, the Membership Expertise Database is another handy tool. There are two expertise data bases: current and non-current. These databases allow people to identify QOL researchers with expertise in certain areas of research (e.g., children well-being, elderly well-being, QOL and the poor, QOL and the disabled, subjective well-being, leisure well-being, family well-being, quality of work life, consumer well-being). If you are an ISQOLS member and have not completed an expertise profile, please do so (that is, if you like others to identify you as an expert in certain areas of QOL research). Also under the Membership icon there is a listing of research centers that specialize in various aspects of QOL research. If you are trying to identify a research organization that conducts QOL research to help you with your research agenda, consult that list. Conversely, if you do belong to a QOL research organization and you want to be included on that list (with links to your own website), you can do so by becoming an institutional member. Contact the Central Office at isqols@vt.edu for more details.

Fourth, ISQOLS website has its first certification program posted. This certification program allows QOL researchers interested in community indicators research to be trained and certified as experts in this area of research. This certification program is administered on-line. There is also a scholarship that can assist those in financial need apply for the certification. Contact me at sirgy@vt.edu if you're interested.

Finally, you may want to take advantage of ISQOLS publications. We have our own journal (*Applied Research in Quality of Life* or ARQOL), two affiliated journals (*Social Indicators Research* [SIR] and the *Journal of Happiness Studies* [JOHS]), and a variety of monographs and conference proceedings. We also have *Social Indicators Network News* (SINET), which is our society's official newsletter. To know more about these publications, visit ISQOLS website at www.isqols.org and click on Publications.

I hope you may find these resources helpful.

It is the beginning of a new academic year in the U.S. and many other universities in the world. On that note I wish you all a happy new academic year.

Joe Sirgy, Ph.D., ISQOLS Executive Director