1. Factors Most Closely Associated with World Happiness

GDP per capita: Higher GDP per capita is strongly correlated with higher happiness scores. Countries with higher economic output per person tend to report a higher sense of well-being.

Healthy Life Expectancy: This factor is also positively correlated with happiness. Healthier populations, with longer life expectancies, report higher levels of happiness.

Social Support: A significant positive correlation exists between social support and happiness. Individuals who have someone to count on in times of trouble or a sense of community are generally happier.

Freedom to Make Life Choices: This factor shows a strong positive correlation with happiness. The ability to choose what to do with one's life is crucial for overall well-being.

Generosity: The correlation between generosity and happiness is positive but less significant compared to other factors. Nonetheless, societies with higher levels of generosity report higher happiness scores.

Perception of Corruption: There is a negative correlation between the perception of corruption and happiness. Countries where corruption is perceived to be widespread tend to have lower happiness scores.

2. Impact of COVID-19 on World Happiness

Mental Health: The pandemic led to a notable decline in mental health, contributing to a overall lower happiness scores in most countries.

Economic Disruption: COVID-19 caused economic hardships, particularly in lower-income countries, further highlighted existing inequalities further reducing happiness levels.

Social Connections: The restriction on social interactions due to lockdowns and social distancing measures diminished social support networks, leading to lower happiness scores.

Resilience: Countries with robust healthcare systems and strong social safety nets demonstrated resilience and saw less impact in happiness scores.

3. Inter-relationships Among Independent Variables

GDP and Life Expectancy: These two variables are positively correlated, as higher GDP often leads to better healthcare infrastructure, which in turn increases life expectancy.

Freedom and Corruption: There is an inverse relationship between freedom and corruption. Countries where citizens feel free to make life choices tend to have lower perceptions of corruption.

Correlations

1. GDP per Capita

Correlation Strength: High

Insight: GDP per capita is one of the most significant predictors of happiness across countries. Wealthier nations generally report higher levels of subjective well-being. This correlation suggests that economic prosperity enables access to better healthcare, education, and social services, which contribute to overall life satisfaction. However, this relationship is not purely linear because at a certain point increases in GDP per capita yield diminishing returns on happiness, indicating that wealth alone cannot sustain happiness.

2. Healthy Life Expectancy

Correlation Strength: High

Insight: Healthy life expectancy is another high correlate of happiness. Populations that enjoy longer, healthier lives tend to report higher happiness scores. This strong relationship underscores the importance of public health initiatives and healthcare systems that prioritize not just longevity but also the quality of life.

3. Social Support

Correlation Strength: Very High

Insight: Social support consistently shows one of the strongest correlations with happiness. The availability of a reliable support network during times of need is a critical factor in determining life satisfaction.

4. Freedom to Make Life Choices

Correlation Strength: High

Insight: The freedom to make life choices is closely tied to happiness. Individuals who perceive themselves as having autonomy over their lives and decisions are significantly more likely to report higher happiness levels. This factor is strongly related to democratic governance, human rights, and personal freedoms. Countries where citizens feel empowered and free tend to score higher on happiness indices.