The Challenge

Context

The World Happiness Report is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness that ranks 156 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be. Since its first publication in 2012, the report has continued to gain global recognition as governments, organizations and civil society increasingly use happiness indicators to inform their policy-making decisions. Leading experts across fields – economics, psychology, survey analysis, national statistics, health, public policy and more – describe how measurements of well-being can be used effectively to assess the progress of nations. The reports review the state of happiness in the world today and show how the new science of happiness explains personal and national variations in happiness.

Objective

Discover interesting insights in the data.

Content

The happiness scores and rankings use data from the Gallup World Poll. The scores are based on answers to the main life evaluation question asked in the poll. This question, known as the Cantril ladder, asks respondents to think of a ladder with the best possible life for them being a 10 and the worst possible life being a 0 and to rate their own current lives on that scale. The scores are from nationally representative samples and use the Gallup weights to make the estimates representative. The columns following the happiness score estimate the extent to which each of six factors – economic production, social support, life expectancy, freedom, absence of corruption, and generosity – contribute to making life evaluations higher in each country than they are in Dystopia, a hypothetical country that has values equal to the world's lowest national averages for each of the six factors. They have no impact on the total score reported for each country, but they do explain why some countries rank higher than others.

Inspiration

- What countries or regions rank the highest in overall happiness and each of the six factors contributing to happiness?
- What is the relationship between trust in government/economy/family/health, etc. and happiness?

- Any interesting facts about countries with the worst positive emotions vs. negative emotions?
- Any interesting correlation among the independent variables themselves?
- Did any country experience a significant increase or decrease in happiness over the years?

Why use these six factors to explain life evaluations?

The variables used reflect what has been broadly found in the research literature to be important in explaining national-level differences in life evaluations. Some important variables, such as unemployment or inequality, do not appear because comparable international data are not yet available for the full sample of countries. The variables are intended to illustrate important lines of correlation rather than to reflect clean causal estimates, since some of the data are drawn from the same survey sources, some are correlated with each other (or with other important factors for which we do not have measures), and in several instances there are likely to be two-way relations between life evaluations and the chosen variables.

Codebook

Variable name	Explanation
Country (region)	Name of the country
Ladder	Cantril ladder is a measure of life satisfaction
SD of Ladder	Standard deviation of the ladder
Positive affect	Measure of average frequency of happiness, laughter and enjoyment on the previous day
Negative affect	Measure of average frequency of worry, sadness and anger on the previous day
Social support	The extent to which Social support contributed to the calculation of the Happiness Score
Freedom	The extent to which Freedom contributed to the calculation of the Happiness Score
Corruption	The extent to which Perception of Corruption contributes to Happiness Score
Generosity	The extent to which Generosity contributes to the calculation of Happiness Score

Log of GDP   The extent to which GDP contributes to the calculation of Happiness Score

Healthy life   The extent to which Life expectancy contributes to Happiness Score